

EVENING POST ESSAYS

IN REVIEW OF

"THE BIBLE FOR LEARNERS."

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EVENING POST ESSAYS

IN REVIEW OF

"THE BIBLE FOR LEARNERS"

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

WHEN the New Testament volume of "The Bible for Learners" was published, the EVENING POST printed its own editorial review, confining that review, as it became a secular newspaper to do, to the task of explaining what the book was in its nature and purpose. Upon questions of theology and biblical interpretation it is not the business of a daily journal to have or express editorial opinions. But there were peculiar circumstances which made the publication of this book a matter of general interest to the public. For the first time the most advanced rationalism was here presented by learned clergymen of a church, which in this country, is a type of strict orthodoxy; and this fact necessarily prompted readers everywhere to ask: Whither are we drifting? Is this what orthodox clergymen really believe? What have they to say upon this subject?

The EVENING POST determined to furnish the best possible answers to these questions. To this end clergymen of eminence in the several Protestant churches, men whose names are everywhere recognised as scholars and thinkers, were requested to make such replies as they saw fit, in the columns of the EVENING POST. In securing these essays the EVENING POST placed no restrictions whatever upon the writers, except in the necessary limitation of space, its purpose being not to secure the teaching of this or that doctrine, or the suppression of anything, but to give its readers full and accurate information with respect to the attitude of American Protestant divines toward this work and what it represents.

At the suggestion of readers who have thought that these answers should be made permanently accessible to the public, they are here gathered into a volume in the order of their original publication.

THE BOOK AND ITS AUTHORS.

From THE EVENING POST'S Review of the Work.

No recent book is more significant of the changes wrought in man's views of historical Christianity by modern criticism acting upon minds imbued with the modern spirit of daring research and bold questioning than "The Bible for Learners," of which the third volume, devoted to the narratives of the New Testament, is now published in translation. Every reader in middle life will be impressed with the change that has come over the world as he compares the probable reception which would have been given to such a work twenty-five years ago with that which is accorded to it now.

It is the work of eminent divines, Dr. Kuenen, Dr. Oort and Dr. Hooykaas—the present volume having been prepared by Dr. Hooykaas—and it is intended for the use of religious readers; yet its criticism of the historical parts of the New Testament is as bold and as destructive as the most advanced free-thinker of a generation ago could have wished.

It has for its foundation the entire rejection of the theory of literal inspiration, and the boldness of its criticism, the confidence with which the authors set aside as fictitious many of the things gravely told in the gospels, will be far more appalling to minds accustomed to regard the New Testament with reverence than was the criticism of the first volume, which treated many of the Old Testament stories as variations of ancient myths. To all readers not fully aware of the extent to which modern criticism has gone in its examination of the New Testament some parts of the work will be startling.

Thus it will surprise many persons to learn that the eminent theologians who are the authors of the work utterly reject the story of the wise men who were led by a star to the cradle of the infant Jesus; that they regard the account of Herod's slaughter of the innocents as historically untrue; that they criticise

destructively the story of the visit of the child Jesus to the temple in his thirteenth year; that they explain away the epiphanies, rejecting the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ. Scarcely less appalling to many readers will be the method adopted in dealing with the miracles. These are rejected of course, so far as their miraculous character is concerned, and the literal truth of the narratives is disputed. Most of the accounts are held to have been, originally, metaphorical sketches, a sort of parables, which were afterward misconstrued by a generation of literal interpreters. As an example of the critical method employed, let us refer to the miraculous draught of fishes. Concerning this we read in the commentary as follows:

"We must certainly take this narrative as having a symbolic meaning. How far we can safely go in this direction is not certain. This much is clear, however, that the unsuccessful fishing represents the natural incapacity of the disciples, and their marvellous subsequent success the fruits of the preaching as emissaries of Jesus. We are tempted to suppose that when the legend represents the disciples as casting their nets near the shore to no purpose, but finding abundant success in the open sea, it refers to the meagre results of the preaching to the Jews, and the countless multitudes won among the heathen. Even if this is going too far we may very well believe that the objection urged by Simon represents the Jewish narrowness which the apostles had to overcome, and the putting out into the deep waters, where they take such a marvellous draught of fish, typifies their mission to the whole world. But whatever may be thought of the details, it is quite certain that this story is an imitation or working up of the previous one. The calling of the four fishermen is the original, and the miraculous draught of fishes a copy."

The criticism in this passage is far less positive than that given to some of the other miracles, and especially that which is bestowed upon the accounts of the raising of Jairus's daughter and the son of the widow of Nain

from the dead. Comparing these accounts with those of the other miracles the author says:

"In this spirit and from this cause all the emblematic sketches of the Master's outer actions and inner life which were in circulation from the earliest times were gradually transformed into stories of miracles. We have continually endeavored to restore these sketches to their original significance, but there are some narratives which hardly admit of such treatment. We will give two of them as specimens. They differ from the stories we have already examined, inasmuch as the others simply speak of all kinds of miraculous healings, whereas these two show that the Christians actually went so far as to ascribe raising from the dead to their Master. Jesus did indeed declare that he called the (spiritually) dead to life again ; but these stories owe their origin not so much to a misconception of this saying as to the simple love of the marvellous which could not bear the Christ to be outdone by the prophets Elijah and Elisha. It is possible, however, that Jesus may on some occasion have entered a house of mourning and endeavored to restrain the violent demonstrations of grief, and to banish the sorrow without hope by the consoling assurance that death was but a sleep which a glorious waking would succeed. Some such saying may have determined the form of the following story."

Then follow the two narratives already referred to, after which we have the following comments :

"These stories are not without artistic merit, but from a religious point of view they have little or no value. To translate a word of the Holy Spirit into a material prodigy is anything but a deed of faith. For the rest the gradual heightening of the marvel is obvious. First we have a girl, who has but just expired; then a young man who is on the point of being buried. Before long it was asserted that Jesus had restored a body to life after it had been buried four days and was already decomposing! But this latter story belongs to a different class, and the two we have given already are quite enough."

The passages which we have copied sufficiently indicate the spirit of entire critical freedom with which the authors have examined the New Testament narratives. For the rest their scholarship and eminent ability are beyond question, and their manner is singularly attractive to every thoughtful reader, whatever his personal opinions may be. The wealth of illustrations drawn from Apocryphal gospels, from history, from prophecy, from every conceivable source, and lavished upon the subjects treated, is very remarkable.

DR. PHILIP SCHAFF'S ESSAY.

The Book an Attempt to Popularize the Theories of Strauss and the Tübingen School—The Resurrection of Christ Examined as a Test Case—The Four Possible Hypotheses—How the Dutch Critics Ask Us to Believe the Incredible.

It is now forty-five years since Dr. David Friedrich Strauss, then Repetent in the University of Tübingen, created a great sensation in the theological world by his "*Leben Jesu*" (1835), in which he placed the Gospel history on a par with heathen mythology and resolved the miracles of our Saviour into innocent poetic creations of the religious imagination of the second generation of his followers. He sacrificed the facts, but vainly imagined to save the ideas of Christianity. The mythical theory did not survive its author, who before his death in 1874 exchanged the philosophy of Hegel for the science of Darwin, the gospel of idealism for the gospel of materialism, and resolved religion itself into an empty delusion. He even so far forgot himself in his last book that he called the resurrection of our Lord "a world-historical humbug."

Thirty years later the celebrated French Orientalist, Ernest Renan, created an even greater sensation by his less learned and acute, but more genial, popular and eloquent "*Vie de Jésus*" (1863), which turned the life of the sage of Nazareth into an interesting poetic legend with an erotic episode and a tragical conclusion. Both Renan and Strauss have done much good by calling attention to the human aspect of Christ's life and work, and stimulating a great deal of profound and learned investigation of the Gospels. Error is always providentially overruled for the promotion of truth.

Now we have a third sensation which comes from Holland in the shape of a book under the title "*The Bible for Learners*," by Oort and Hooykaas, under the inspiration of Professor Kuonen, of Leyden, translated into English by Philip H. Wicks'eed, and republished by Roberts Brothers in Boston (1879). The third volume of the American edition (the 6th of the English) covers the New Testament, the Life of Christ and the Apostolic Age. The work contains nothing new, but it is the first systematic attempt to popularize the theories of Strauss and the Tübingen school. It is serious in tone, and concludes with an endorsement of the ideas of the Gospel and First Epistle of John; "Blessed is he whose heart

receives this truth, whose life sets a seal upon it! God is Spirit! God is Light! God is Love! And, from the bottom of our hearts we wish that blessing to each of our readers!" But it eliminates from the Gospel of John the supernatural element, and assigns it to a great unknown writer in the middle of the second century, that is, to a time when it was already generally known and used in the Christian Church!

It would take a book to refute this book in all its details. I propose to discuss only one point in this article, the resurrection of Christ. This is the test of the true theory and the rock on which all false theories of the Gospel history split. If we accept the resurrection of Christ there is no difficulty about the other miracles. If we reject it the other miracles fall with it, and Christianity must be either an imposture or a delusion. The Jewish philosopher Spinoza said if he could believe the resurrection of Lazarus, he would at once become a Christian.

There are four possible theories of the resurrection of Christ.

1. It was a real miracle such as it is represented in the Gospels and believed in the Christian Church, namely, a reanimation of the body of Christ by the return of his soul from the spirit-world, and a rising of body and soul from the grave to a new life on earth, which forty days afterward was crowned by the ascension to heaven. It is not easy to harmonize all the apparent discrepancies in the records, but the difficulties are not to be compared with those which make the other three theories absolutely impossible. With those who deny the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body it is vain to reason.

2. The resurrection was a downright fraud. The apostles stole or hid the body of Jesus and humbugged the world. This was a deliberate lie fabricated by the Jews who crucified the Lord (Matt. 28:12-15). It carries its refutation on the face: for if the soldiers who watched the grave were asleep they could not see the thieves, nor would they have proclaimed their military crime; if they or only some of them were awake they would have

prevented the theft. Beside, the disciples were too timid to venture on such an act, and too honest to manufacture such a lie and to deceive the world. No decent Christian writer has dared to insult the common sense and the honor of mankind by defending this revolting absurdity.

3. The resurrection was a rising from a trance or asphyxy. Christ was not really dead, but only exhausted, and was restored by the tender care of the disciples. This is the view of the older and vulgar rationalism ably advocated by Paulus of Heidelberg, but as ably refuted by Strauss, his successor in the history of error. A natural death and final burial of Jesus after a few weeks of sickly existence would have only deepened the gloom of the disciples and driven them to utter despair.

4. The vision theory. Christ rose in the imagination of his friends, who mistook a subjective vision or dream for actual reality, and were thereby encouraged to proclaim the Gospel of the resurrection at the risk of death. This is the hypothesis of Strauss and Renan, with the difference that the former traces this dream to the apostles in Galilee, the latter to Mary Magdalene in Jerusalem, saying that "the passion of an hallucinated woman gave to the world a risen God"! In Germany this view has been long since thoroughly refuted in scholarly circles. Even Keim, a very liberal and independent critic (author of the "*Leben Jesu von Nazara*"), admits that it is necessary to assume that Christ really rose at least in spirit to account at all for the marvellous revolution in the mind of the Apostles and for the founding of the Christian Church. But "*The Bible for Learners*" repeats this exploded hypothesis without even a perception of the amazing difficulties which it creates. According to Dr. Hoekyaas, minister at Rotterdam, "the belief in the 'resurrection' was but the form assumed by the reviving faith of the disciples," and "forms a chapter of the inner life of the disciples, not of the outward life of the Master;" in other words, "it is not an external fact of history, but simply a form of belief assumed by the faith of his friends and earliest disciples" (III. p. 463). He differs from Strauss and Renan only in this, that he seems to date the belief from the disciples at Emmaus, and yet in the next breath he doubts the very existence of such a place because it has not yet been satisfactorily identified by biblical archaeologists.

This hypothesis does not account for the empty sepulchre, and must (like the second

theory) assume that the body of Jesus was stolen and hid away. If removed by friends, they were guilty of fraud; if stolen by enemies, they could have produced it at any time as the best refutation of the resurrection dream. Moreover, the vision hypothesis requires us to believe the most incredible miracle of all—that many persons, singly and collectively, at different times and in different places, had the same vision and dreamed the same dream; that the women at the sepulchre early in the morning, Peter and John soon afterward, James, the brother of the Lord, who did not believe in Him before, the two disciples journeying to Emmaus on the afternoon of the resurrection day, the disciples on the evening of the same day in the absence of Thomas, and again on the next Lord's Day evening in the presence of Thomas the doubter, the disciples on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, on one occasion five hundred disciples at once, and at last the clear-headed, strong-minded persecutor Saul on the way to Damascus—that all these men and women on these different occasions vainly imagined they saw the self-same Jesus; and were by this empty imagination raised all at once from the deepest gloom in which the tragedy of the crucifixion had left them, to the boldest faith and the strongest hope which impelled them to proclaim the Gospel of the resurrection in all parts of the Roman world at the risk of their lives! *Credat Judeus Apella!*

And this illusion of the early disciples created not only the greatest revolution in their own mind and conduct, but in the world and the history of mankind! This illusion, we are expected to believe by these unbelievers, gave birth to the most real and most comprehensive of all facts—the Christian Church, which has lasted these eighteen hundred years and is now spread all over the civilized world, embracing more members than ever and exercising more moral power than all the kingdoms and all other religions combined! By trying to explain away the supernatural miracle of the resurrection, the rationalists and infidels of the day substitute an unnatural prodigy in its place. Instead of explaining the mystery, they leave it more inexplicable than ever.

The greatest of modern skeptics, the late Dr. Bauer, the teacher of Strauss and the master of the Tübingen School, who could put half a dozen Oorts and Hoekyaases into his vest pocket, felt this difficulty at the close of his life, and declared, after thirty or forty years of incessant study and reflection, that

he stood before the conversion of St. Paul as a psychological mystery which he could not explain, and which cannot be explained without admitting the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Yes! Christ, the risen Christ, the Christ of the Gospels, the Christ of history, the Christ of faith, is the most real, the most certain, the most blessed fact; his atoning death and triumphant resurrection are the only solution of

the terrible mystery of sin and death; and his life and example the only guide to purity and holiness. All attacks upon that rock have failed in the past and will fail in the future. And of this Dutch book, too, it will be said, what Athanasius the Great, who stood *unus versus mundum*, said of Julian the Apostate: "It is a little cloud; it will soon pass away."

PHILIP SCHAFF.

DR. T. W. CHAMBERS'S ESSAY.

The Decay of Spiritual Life in the Reformed Church in Holland—What the Theory of "The Bible for Learners" is and Whither it Leads—Have Eighteen Centuries of Christian Civilization Rested upon a Mere Delusion.

"The Bible for Learners," of which the third volume containing the New Testament has just been published, has attracted a great deal more attention than it deserves. This is owing to several causes. One is the fact that the work gives in a popular and very intelligent form the conclusions of what has been called "the destructive criticism" of the Scriptures, a criticism which rules out the supernatural, mocks at inspiration and handles sacred narrative just as it would profane mythology. The authors, quietly assuming that the correctness of this method of dealing with God's word is established, proceed to apply it throughout, shunning processes but giving results, so that no ordinary reader can fail to get the impression that the Bible has no objective authority whatever, and that all its use and value lies in such rational application as we may make of the residuum of truth that is left after clearing away the mass of fable in which it has been wrapped up. Such a view as this has seemed the more startling because coming from divines and professors of the Protestant Church of Holland, which, both for its early steadfastness in its own land and the unwavering orthodoxy of its daughter in America for a quarter of a millennium, has been considered a bulwark of the old faith, whereas the reverse is the case. A decay in the spiritual life of the Reformed Church in Holland, be-

ginning a century ago, gradually spread until it opened the way for rationalism in its extreme forms. The intellect was fed, but the soul was starved. Within the last twenty years Holland has stepped to the front rank in all branches of biblical learning, and Germany no longer has the pre-eminence. Ewald's great name has given way to Kuenen's. But this has involved no return to the older and sounder methods of biblical interpretation. On the contrary the tendency has been to a bolder and wider departure from traditional opinion, so far, indeed, that one can hardly conjecture what more can be done without throwing away the Scripture altogether.

But it would be a great error to confound this view with that of scurrilous revilers such as Paine or Ingersoll. There is little or no difference as to substance and final result, but there is a very great difference in form and tone. "The Bible for Learners" is studiously devout and respectful. It acknowledges and defends, and even patronizes, not only religion in general, but the Hebrew religion and the Christian, giving to each the highest praise in comparison with all contemporary and rival faiths. See, for example, this tribute to the Saviour (p. 32): "In any case we shall hear enough of him to be filled with the deepest admiration and reverence for his character, to love him in our inmost hearts,

and to feel ourselves unspeakably indebted to him." Again (p. 356) he is called "the inspired advocate of the new and immortal principle of man's worth and God's love," and is said to have acted "in the spirit of redeeming love." Moreover the errors of the New Testament, as they are called, are not attributed to deliberate purpose, but are expressly said to be generally unintentional. Four causes are assigned for their occurrence. 1. Embellishment, as the natural accompaniment of an oral tradition; 2. Misunderstanding, as for example in accepting literally what was only spoken metaphorically; 3. Preconceived ideas, insensibly coloring simple and genuine reports; and 4. Conflict of Parties, leading each party to represent the Master's sayings and doings in a way favorable to its own view, or even in case of need to invent an utterance or an incident teaching what it conceived must have been his judgment. Of course these things are fatal to the credibility of the narrators, but they are put in a milder way than is common with opponents of the truth.

The theory of the book is this: It denies that any one of the five historical books of the New Testament was written by the person whose name it bears, and says that they are all of more recent date than their headings imply. Of the thirteen epistles assigned to Paul, six, if not seven, are unauthentic. The same condemnation is passed upon all the Catholic epistles and also upon the last book in the Bible. But the various writings contain the early traditions of the Christian church modified in the ways already mentioned. The business of the interpreter is to sift carefully all the materials they furnish, disengage the true from the false, the real from the imaginary, the simple from the exaggerated, and so weave what remains into one self-consistent whole as a genuine picture of Christ and his work. And this is what the authors of "The Bible for Learners" profess to have done.

Upon their work it is to be remarked:

1. That it is all based upon the Denial of the Supernatural. The writers come to the Bible with the well-settled conviction that the narrative of any miraculous event is *ipso facto* unhistorical. They therefore interpret everything accordingly, never in a single instance rising above the plane of nature. Thus Jesus, although great beyond expression, is only a man, and the miracles ascribed to him are either concessions to the spirit of the age or else symbolical representations. But

as the supernatural is wrought into the warp and woof of Scripture, the only way to get rid of it is to impeach the date of the sacred writings, and insist that in the shape in which they have come to us they are filled with interpolated matter. The laborious inquiries as to the origin of certain books and the prompt decision as to others are all due to a foregone conclusion. And yet we have the assertion of the greatest of philosophical rationalists, John Stuart Mill (Theism, pt. iv.), that there is no *a priori* ground to judge miracles impossible. It is purely a question as to the sufficiency of the evidence. If this be so, the entire work of Drs. Oort and Hooykaas is built upon a fundamental error. They have assumed what they ought to have proved when they say (p. 87), "we shall unconditionally reject everything even in our canonical Gospels which contradicts Nature." Nor have they at all accounted for the character of Jesus if that was simply a natural development. It certainly did not take its spring from the Judaism of the day, still less from Gentile sources, nor yet from a blending of both. If we look simply to the common known elements of our human nature, the Christ of the Gospels is an effect without an adequate cause. To talk of his transcendent genius, his great gifts of heart and head, is simply to account for a thing by itself. What we want to know is the natural origin of this absolutely unique development of life and character.

2. The theory of "The Bible for Learners" destroys the whole authority of the Scripture. It does not simply diminish or weaken it, but overthrows it from beginning to end, and this, notwithstanding the fine words the authors are pleased to use respecting the Bible as a book "of inestimable value." For if it be full of legends, however beautiful or edifying, if it contain large admixtures of error, if its most important portions be products of a later age than they claim on their face, then it ceases to be a final arbiter of faith or morals. Its testimony on any given question amounts to nothing, for before it can be used we must satisfy ourselves from outside sources whether the portion cited is really the word of man or the word of God, whether it was a correct report of the original tradition or has been enlarged, abridged or otherwise altered in the course of transmission. But obviously this is not a work which ordinary readers can do for themselves. The Bible therefore ceases to be the book of the people.

It furnishes excellent materials for the inquirer who is constructing the science of religion, but as a popular *vade mecum*, as a guide to the young, the perplexed or the tempted, as a comfort in death or a source of hope for a future life, it fails to be of any service. It raises many more questions than it settles. Above all it gives no divine support to our poor nature in its struggles with sin. If we can infer something wholesome or helpful, well and good; but if not, alas! there is no utterance from the skies to sound in our ears, as the Master's words came across the waste of waters to the sinking Peter, "It is I, be not afraid." In the nature of the case a religion must be authoritative. Science or philosophy may content itself with probable conclusions or a train of inferences, but the human soul, in its yearning for inward peace or its outlook beyond the grave, craves a revelation. It cries for some voice from Him for whom and by whom are all things, nor will it ever rest contented without such a voice. Take this away from the Scriptures and you may have something left, but that something will not be religion.

3. One of the corner-stones of the theory of "The Bible for Learners" is the unhistorical character of the Gospels and their origin in the second century. A very serious objection to this theory is the existence of Apocryphal Gospels which are many and various. Dr. Hooykaas notices these (pp. 84-87), but he regards them simply as the developed results of "the love of the marvellous, the superstitious misapprehension of Jesus, and the tendency to call in the help of the imagination to fill the gaps of history," of which the first beginnings are to be seen in the books of the New Testament itself. This explanation will not answer. On his own theory the Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels were not very far separated in the time of their appearance, but whether they were or were not, we want to know the cause of the difference between them. On one side are four grave, dignified narratives which describe with wondrous force the foremost being who ever appeared in human form, and which have been read and studied and loved by millions of men in every century in our era, and never more than in our own. On the other is a collection of silly and offensive stories, often both impious and absurd, which have never secured the favor of any considerable body of people, and are mentioned only to be repudiated. Now, the old and current explanation of this contrast is that in one case the writers de-

scribed what they saw or heard, and were guided so that they told only the truth, even when that truth was to their own disparagement, while in the other men were left to themselves, did not write from personal knowledge or trustworthy sources, and showed all the weakness and extravagance of an ill-regulated mind and an unbridled imagination. This explanation meets all the facts in the case, while Dr. Hooykaas's meets none of them. According to him the difference is one of degree, whereas it is one of kind—the two sets of narratives differing in tone, in aim, in character, in every feature of literary composition. We have a right to insist, then, that if the Canonical Gospels had been produced as Dr. Hooykaas says they were, they would, they must have been just like the Apocryphal. And it is for him to explain how four writers could be so faithful to truth as to draw the only picture of perfection in word and deed which the world has ever seen, and yet could not refrain from interlarding their narrative with monstrous and incredible fictions of miraculous power.

4. The treatment of the capital fact of Christianity, the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, is characteristic. We have it laid down, as if it were a mathematical axiom, "the return to earth of one already dead and glorified is a thing which far transcends the limits of credibility." Yet this identical thing is set forth by all four evangelists, is asserted over and over in the Acts, and is distinctly stated or clearly implied in nearly every other book of the New Testament. It is made the corner-stone of the kingdom of God and the central point of all theology. It underlies Christ's atonement, his intercession, his exaltation, his second advent, and is the pledge and the pattern of his people's resurrection. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance given to this fact throughout the New Testament. How does Dr. Hooykaas dispose of the matter? The visions which the friends of Jesus had of their departed Master were really but "the fruit and the expression of reviving faith." The whole story was "a product of the religious imagination, gradually amplified and embellished by tradition." We submit that the faith which can accept such a marvellous statement as this ought not to stumble at any miracle recorded in sacred story. As Dr. Flint of Edinburgh says: "Critics who make it an axiom to disbelieve in physical miracles should not expect their readers to believe without proof in psycho-

logical miracles." According to "The Bible for Learners" Jesus never rose from the grave at all, but the disciples were so sure of the ultimate triumph of his cause that they believed they saw him, and this belief they held so firmly as to be willing to die rather than renounce it. And this dream of a distempered imagination lies at the basis of the entire church! Eighteen centuries of Christian civilization resting upon a mere delusion!

It is needless to specify further. The whole book is simply an attempt to reconstruct the Scriptures in the most arbitrary manner to accord with preconceived ideas. Whatever does not agree with the writers' opinions is forthwith rejected as a fabulous addition or an involuntary mistake. And when the

work is done the glory of Christianity is departed.

The Incarnation, the Atonement and the Resurrection are gone. Religion is merely a system of ethics, illustrated by a very bright example. There is no remedy for sin, no escape from guilt, no answer for the cry of an awakened conscience. We see no more the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, but are plunged into the chaos and dark night of mere naturalism. These writers have indeed done away with "the offence of the Cross," but they have at the same time robbed the Gospel of all its sweetness, all its power and all its glory

T. W. CHAMBERS.

PROFESSOR C. W. HODGE'S ESSAY.

The Method of Dutch Criticism Analyzed—The Rejection of the Supernatural in the "Bible for Learners" shown to be Not a Result of Criticism, but the Working Rule of the Critics—A Skepticism which demands more of Faith than Belief itself does.

In looking for the critical principles by the application of which the author of the third volume of "The Bible for Learners" discriminates between what he regards as historical and what as legendary or mythical in the New Testament narratives, it is evident that the denial of the supernatural element is fundamental. The rejection of miracle is not here at least the result of criticism, but the rule by which all critical results are judged. "We shall, therefore, unconditionally reject everything, even in our canonical gospels, which contradicts nature, or is inconsistent with the humanity of Jesus" (p. 87). "Amidst all the doubts that hang around this subject [the resurrection of Christ] of one thing at least we may be sure, namely, that it forms a chapter of the inner life of the disciples, not of the outward life of the Master. In other words, the resurrection of Jesus is not an external fact of history, but simply a form of belief assumed by the faith of his friends and earliest disciples" (p. 463); and so of miracles performed by Christ, to which no naturalistic explanation can be applied. This point of view is essential to the proper estimate of the book, because a foregone conclusion so sweeping in its application, which contradicts the most peculiar feature of the New Testament, must stand in the way of impartial criticism, and also because the inference from critical difficulties against the narratives is greatly weakened when it is seen that they have already been rejected as impossible for philosophical reasons. We cannot say the narrative is untrue because uncritical, and uncritical because necessarily untrue.

A second fundamental canon of this criticism rests upon the alleged disagreement between the testimony of St. Paul, in Epistles which are universally received as genuine, and the narratives of the historical books of the New Testament. After the Gospels and Acts have been swept away, there remain to us as the very first documents of Christianity, from which all historical facts are to be deduced, four or five, or more as may be, of the Epistles of St. Paul. From these controversial Epistles it is inferred that in Paul's time there

were two irreconcilable parties in the Church—the one including the original Apostles, not distinguishable from the Jews except in believing that Jesus was the Messiah, and still insisting on the perpetuity of Mosaic institutions; and the other, Paul's party, teaching his gospel of faith and freedom. Later there arose a third party of union, conciliating these oppositions, and in the process representing the history of Jesus and of the beginnings of the Church from their own point of view. These tendencies thus become the most important means of testing the truth of the canonical books. All history which recognizes unity of faith and feeling as existing originally is to be rejected, and the books which set forth this unity are of late date. The Book of Acts is especially to be rejected, because it betrays this tendency (p. 25). Also a considerable proportion of the gospel narratives arise in the Church out of these controversies, and are therefore to be rejected (p. 31). But if it can be shown, as has been done very satisfactorily, that no such inconsistency exists between Paul's Epistles and the Book of Acts, either as to facts or doctrines; that the whole appearance of difference arises from the purpose of the writers and their point of view; that Paul's hostility to circumcision and to Judaizing teachers refers to a small, discontented Pharisaic faction in the church, such as naturally continued under the conditions of the times, under the narrowing influence of their Jewish training; that, on the other hand, these same Epistles exhibit earnest love for the Jews, and recognition of their Scriptures, and of their rights in the kingdom of Christ; if all this can be shown to be the natural meaning of Paul's writings, the cornerstone of this new criticism is taken away, its radical principle is proved to be based upon an imagination, and the whole history of the origin of Christianity is re-established in consistency with the Book of Acts. Admitting the Epistles to the Galatians, Corinthians and Romans as genuine is admitting too much for the success of this new method, because out of these may be rebuilt the whole foundation and superstructure of New

Testament history which had been overthrown with the historical narratives. The essential facts of the life and death of Christ, his miracles and resurrection, and the doctrines of faith and life involved in these facts, are substantiated in the Epistles of Paul, and the effort to set the two at variance has already proved a conspicuous failure. This Tendency hypothesis has seen its day in Germany, where reaction has for some years set in. Thorough critics in that country begin to reject it as just as inconsistent with impartiality, and with sound historical results, as orthodox and evangelical prejudice can be on the other side. And although retained by individuals or by schools, and attempted to be popularized in England and in this country by translations, these efforts are but the last lash of the wave upon the shore, more noisy perhaps, but with the weight and force already spent.

Thus far, it will be perceived, this school of criticism, which we have been describing, proceeds upon internal grounds; it is very important to inquire what evidence it can bring from the external history of the New Testament books themselves to its support. Vast learning has been expended upon this field, and with very valuable results. In the nature of the case this evidence lies in the literature of the early Christian writers, and in their use of the New Testament books. And to produce the effect of evidence upon the mind it must be studied, and can only be referred to here. For an able and comprehensive exhibition of this evidence, on this side of the question, nothing better could be hoped for than the work entitled "Supernatural Religion," published a few years ago in England. And for a masterly answer the reader may be referred to a series of articles by Dr. J. B. Lightfoot, then Professor in Cambridge, now Bishop of Durham. It can only be said here, in the most general way, that on this theory of the later authorship of the New Testament books, we would expect to find that they very gradually found acceptance as belonging to the canon; some would be received in one part of the church and rejected in others, and very great differences would exist in the amount of evidence of their antiquity and authority. On the contrary, but a very few years after the date assigned on this theory to the latest of these books, the whole New Testament, with exceptions too inconsiderable to require specification here, existed in three languages, the original Greek, the Syriac and the Latin, and was quoted and accepted

precisely as the Church now accepts it as the rule of faith. At the time some of these questioned books are said to have been composed they are current over the whole Church, from the Euphrates to the Atlantic and are by contemporary writers spoken of and discussed as already ancient. No learning and no ingenuity can ever account for this fact on any other ground than that of the origin of the books from some source of authority universally revered from the beginning. And this quoting is traced up through the earlier portions of the second century to the very verge of the Apostolic age, completely shutting off the time necessary for the origin of the books in the way required by the Tendency theory. These quotations are indeed contested, and in the case of the gospels especially, ascribed to previously existing forms through which our canonical gospels passed, while the mythical and doctrinal elements were being wrought into their texture. But what has become of these previously existing forms? What accounts for their absolute loss? How came the existing gospels to supersede them so universally and absolutely that no trace remains of them, and only the shrewd modern critic can on purely internal grounds separate the original from the mass of superimposed material? In short, this theory strikes against abundant and clear literary testimony of antiquity. Even accepting the statement of the facts in the case as presented by this criticism in its own interests, as scholars are by no means ready to do, they offer us a state of things impossible to reconcile with their own principles.

Another test which must be applied to every theory is its success in accounting for the facts which it was framed to explain. Now according to the New Testament the two great factors of Christianity in its origin were the resurrection of Christ and the immediate personal influence of God upon the souls of men by his Holy Spirit. From this starting-point the whole development of the Church in life and doctrine is traced, and the gradual delivery of its sacred literature. But eliminating these from the account, and how does our theory explain to us the belief in the resurrection, the doctrines which Paul taught as his gospel, and the pure morality and new life which Christians succeeded in establishing with such tenacity, under most unfavorable conditions? The belief in resurrection is due in the first instance, we are told, to the doctrine of Hades, in whose

shades the intense personal reverence for Jesus could not allow his disciples to believe that his soul remained, together with visions produced within their excited imaginations, which they conceived were personal appearances of Christ in the body. And when Paul in his Epistle appealed to five hundred brethren who had seen the risen Lord, most of whom were alive when he wrote, the same explanation is all that is offered us (p. 467).

As to the doctrines of the new Testament, instead of being a divine revelation, explaining the salvation provided and wrought out in the life and death of Jesus in such a way that the truth is always embodied in the fact before it is stated in words, they are ascribed to the genius and experience of a single man. Paul converted, going to Arabia for solitude, growing in experience and by controversy during his life, conceives and logically develops that system of truth which it has been the work of the Church to study and exhibit ever since.

And the whole blessing of Christianity to the world consists in the character of Jesus and his pure morality. These alone, immediately overlaid by superstitious dogmas, which hindered its acceptance alike among Jews and Gentiles, are left to account for the devotion and the success which attended the simple preaching of the gospel. Now here are gaps from the death of Jesus to the universal belief in his resurrection, from the Pharisaic ideas of religion to the doctrines of Paul, which this theory attempts to bridge over by these heroic methods; and thinks its historical task is done, when it says that Christianity with all that it has accomplished in the world is based not on fact and a divinely given life, but upon a false belief. The demand thus made upon faith is too great for ordinary men. Let any one read the "Bible for Learners" side by side with Professor Fisher's "Beginnings of Christianity," and decide for himself which is history.

One other difficulty with this theory relates to the morality ascribed to these men who have given to the world the purest ethics it can ever know. Here are forgeries among the New Testament writings, which we are told are due to the literary habits of antiquity. But these forgeries are not simply in the interests of truth, but intended to convey false impressions of facts, "disguising the real state of things almost past recognition." We would prefer to take our moral lessons from some other source. There is the gospel of John, the most profoundly spiritual portion of the whole New Testament. "Bet-

ter than any of the early messengers of Christ did he perceive and teach the power and worth of Christianity as the new principle of human life." "In religious genius he transcended them all by the lofty flight of his spirit, by the depth of his feeling, and by his exaltation above the strife and the disappointment of the apostolic age" (p. 691). And yet, "for the history of Jesus we cannot use the work; we need never consult it, and shall do best to put it entirely out of our minds." "The evangelist puts his own ideas, clothed in his own style, into the mouths of Jesus and others." Did the writer believe that he was giving his own thoughts, or did he expect his readers to believe it? Did he intend them to believe the facts in the history of Christ, which differ so much in his gospel from the others, as true history, or not? Many of these facts are quite dissociated from the truths he taught, and were gratuitously invented, unless he believed them to be true.

The same difficulty attaches to the representation of the character of Jesus. He considers himself a true Israelite, by precept and example teaches the observance of the forms of religion and the Jewish Scriptures, believes as his countrymen believed. Yet all his teaching is in direct collision with the greater part of the Old Testament; "The God of Jesus is not the Old Testament God." When he healed multitudes of sick, and excited confidence and enthusiasm because those healed and the people at large believed that he healed miraculously, he either allowed them to think so, and took advantage of the deception, or shared with them in the mistaken notion. When he cast out devils, as the people thought, did he know that he only cured a nervous complaint, or did he think that he had power over devils? Shall we save our reverence for his truth at the expense of his superior intelligence, or maintain his superiority to his times at the expense of his truth? The more we retain of the historical truth of the narrative, the more we lean, as Rénan does, toward involving the truth of Christ; the more we reject, with the "Bible for Learners," the more free are we to adopt the other alternative. But, in either case, an impossible conception is left to us of one who is the ideal representative of the life of God among men, the author and source of the divine morality, the imitation of whom is the highest life, yet clouded and distorted by erroneous conceptions of God, and of sacrifice, and of Jewish pre-eminence; truth and falsehood commingled, essential truth in moral precept, not

only combined with, but originating in a mind full of darkness and mistake and superstition about the spiritual world and the future. Such a conception has never yet been more than a fiction of criticism; it has not and can never become a living influence over men.

In carrying these principles of criticism into detail it must strike the reader that very slight grounds of objection are made occasion for most confident conclusions. It is incredible, it is improbable; if this had been so something else must have occurred; these are the formulas on every page. Any history or narrative of contemporary events could be treated in the same way. Men do not allow interests of any importance to depend upon knowledge of facts obtained by such means. If we are to choose so arbitrarily what shall be received and what rejected, it would be far better for each man to read his New Testament and choose for himself what he can believe. For if we are to depend upon authority, surely the authority of the New Testament itself has the preponderating value, and we might better let it interpret itself than reject

its obvious meaning upon the authority of a school of criticism so irresponsible and so changeable.

Did space permit it would be in place to show on the other hand the organic unity of the New Testament. How that, when we once admit the truth of a supernatural revelation, every event falls into its place in its relation to every other; how each writing occasioned immediately by local and passing needs, nevertheless constitutes a necessary part of the whole; how history and literature, fact and doctrine, are set forth in a living progress, and how the life of Christians and of Christianity finds its spring and motive in the record, and all its benefits are accounted for. To those who have already abandoned faith it can readily be conceived that such a book as the "Bible for Learners" may furnish a support to their views; but that any one with the evidence, external and internal, once fairly understood, should abandon the New Testament for this new gospel, which yet is not another, is hardly probable.

CASPAR WISTAR HODGE,

THE REV. JOHN W. CHADWICK'S ESSAY.

The View of an Advanced Unitarian—How the Mythical Theory since Strauss's Day has Colored Criticism, and How Baur's Tendency Theory has Modified it—The Attitude of Matthew Arnold and Other Reverent Thinkers.

The general character of "The Bible for Learners" has already been sufficiently indicated by other writers in this series of articles. It is a work of three volumes in the American edition (six in the English), of which the first two are devoted to the Old Testament, while the third is devoted to the New. The Old Testament volumes are written by Dr. H. Oort, Professor of Oriental Languages at Amsterdam, and the New Testament part by Dr. I. Hooykaas, pastor at Rotterdam. The relation of Dr. Kuenen of Leiden to the work is purely advisory. The whole has been submitted to his criticism. The writers Oort and Hooykaas have also been critics, each of the other's work. And so the work as a whole is representative of the collective wisdom of three scholars, one of whom, Kuenen, is the acknowledged head of biblical learning in Holland. Oort is hardly less able, though less widely known. Hooykaas stands upon a lower plane of ability and reputation, but suffers only in comparison with the giants who are his companions. The English edition, following the Dutch original, is called "The Bible for Young People," and the character of the book is better indicated by this title than by the American, "The Bible for Learners." The aim throughout is edification—to extort, or, where this is difficult, to impose a moral element. The criticism is never warped by this aim, but its force is frequently obscured.

It would be a manifest injustice to take a work of this sort as fairly representative of the intellectual quality of the Dutch school of criticism. It will do very well for "young people," but "learners" who have arrived at years of discretion will not content themselves with it. The most characteristic utterance of the school is Kuenen's "Religion of Israel" translated in 3 volumes octavo. His "Prophets and Prophecy in Israel," also translated, is hardly less characteristic. Those who do not find in "The Bible for Learners" foemen worthy of their steel would do well to grapple with Kuenen in his major works.

The originality of the "Bible for Learners" is more conspicuous in the Old Testament than in the New Testament part. In the

New Testament part there is nothing specially characteristic of the Dutch school. The method is similar to that of Keim in his "Jesus of Nazara," where he accounts for the miraculous element in a variety of ways, combining the mythical theory of Strauss with the tendency theory of Baur and the theory of unconscious exaggeration and embellishment. A writer in this series has spoken of the mythical theory as having died before its author. On the contrary, he reaffirmed it a few years before his death with new emphasis and force, at the same time allowing more for the action of other forces than he had done at first, just as Darwin, without rejecting the idea of natural selection, has come to allow more to the action of other causes of variation, notably to sexual selection. The theory of Strauss, the myths of which, by the way, bear no resemblance to the nature myths of Greece and India, has passed into the life of modern criticism. It has colored every study of the New Testament that has been written since his day. It has been supplemented mainly by the tendency theory of F. C. Baur, the gist of which is that a doctrinal and polemical bias affected the New Testament writers in almost every book. That he pushes this theory too far, as Strauss did the mythical theory, is not to be denied. But this too is an integral part of all vital criticism since his time. His lectureship, the Rev. Joseph Cook, would have us believe that this is also dead. If it is, it is a very "lively corpse." Witness the reception accorded to the anonymous "Supernatural Religion" in England, which is dominated throughout by the Tübingen method of Baur, and which the microscopic criticism of Dr. Lightfoot leaves substantially intact. Witness also the recent "Introduction to the New Testament" by Hilgenfeld, a pupil of Baur and the ablest living representative of the Tübingen school. The New Testament part of "The Bible for Learners" pursues a method which is not so much eclectic as synthetic. It combines the different methods in due proportions. This is the method of progress. The discoverer or inventor of a critical method always pushes it too far. Others will balance it with

other methods, assigning to each its proper weight. The results of the New Testament part will appear novel to the general reader only because, heretofore, the results of criticism have been confined to the class-room of the professor. There has been an enormous gulf between scholarship and pulpit exposition. A distinguished divine once said to me that Renan's "Life of Jesus" should have been printed in Latin and then it would have been well enough, for only scholars could have read it. This esoteric habit has been somewhat changed of late. In "Literature and Dogma" and "God and the Bible" Matthew Arnold has expressed or implied nearly all the results which are set forth in "The Bible for Learners" with more concreteness and elaboration. Without mentioning Kuenen he is steeped in his method—in his theory of Old Testament development.

It is by no means necessary to the method of "The Bible for Learners" to conceive that a miracle is impossible. It is only necessary to return a verdict of unproven. The more unusual an event, it will be agreed, the more evidence there must be to support it. Tell us that an omnibus was seen upon Broadway and we accept the statement at once, such an event occurs so frequently. But tell us that a centaur was seen upon Broadway, and, in Huxley's phrase, "nothing short of a monograph by Johannes Müller would convince us that it was so." Now, what is our evidence for the New Testament miracles? It rests almost entirely upon four documents of the existence of which we hear for the first time with absolute certainty in the fourth quarter of the second century. Grant that they were written in the first quarter, we are still removed three-quarters of a century from the life of Jesus. And the time was wholly uncritical. Things were believed because they were unusual and astonishing. Literary ethics were unknown. Can we be expected to believe upon the far-off traditional evidence of such writings statements which we could not believe upon the evidence of a college of physicians?

Take the resurrection of Jesus. We are assured that the increasing prevalence of the belief without the fact involves a psychological miracle greater than a resurrection from the dead. But belief without fact is an everyday occurrence, but resurrections from the dead are at least as rare as centaurs in our modern life. We are asked how could so many persons at different times and places have had the same illusion. It is not necessary to suppose any-

thing of this sort, although one illusion generally begets another. The appearances of the risen Jesus here and there must be established as facts before we are called upon to account for them and reconcile them with each other. And to establish them as facts upon such evidence as we have is manifestly impossible. "Last of all," says Paul, "he was seen of me also." This is the only direct testimony that we have to the resurrection of Jesus. And from this it appears that Paul puts his own vision of the risen Jesus years after his death on a level with his previous appearances, or rather that he puts the previous appearances exactly on a level with his own vision. I submit that this is the most damaging evidence that Paul could give. For it remands all the phenomena of Jesus's appearances to his disciples and others after his death to that visionary sphere where there is nothing but a quicksand for us to build our creed upon.

Christianity originated then in an illusion? No; in a life which made such an impression on the disciples that they could not conceive of its extinction. But it was developed into a great world-force by an illusion? No; but by a thousand and ten thousand co-operant forces, among which the doctrine of the resurrection was only one of the most powerful. Does this seem an aspersion on the method of Christian development? But fictions, legal and other, and illusions, have played no unimportant part in the developments of history.

But, although it is the New Testament part of "The Bible for Learners" that will challenge the popular faith most seriously, it is the Old Testament part that is most characteristic of the school from which it emanates. Yet even the Old Testament part will shock and pain the sensibilities of Christian people less because of its intrinsic newness than because the light of criticism has heretofore been kept under a bushel, instead of set in a candlestick that it may give light to all who are in the house. The same results, expressed or implied, have been before the public for some time in Matthew Arnold's writings. But Arnold is not an ecclesiastic nor a theologian. Well, then, these results have been, the majority of them, accessible to scholars in Davidson's "Introduction to the Old Testament;" and Davidson is a scholar who began where Horne left off, and has only, inch by inch, obedient to the pressure of the facts upon his understanding, come to his present radical conclusions. If a person of ecclesiastical standing is preferred we have such a one in Dean Stanley. With one con-

siderable and some inconsiderable exceptions the results of the Dutch school are all embodied in the Dean's "History of the Jewish Church." His great master is Ewald, but there is evidence in his latest volume that Kuenen has made a great impression on his mind. There is no moral difference between Stanley's results and Kuenen's, nor between Kuenen's and Ewald's. Take the most radical: All assign Daniel to the Maccabæan period; all allow a Deutero-Isaiah; all split up Zechariah into fragments and so on. All assign Deuteronomy to the time of Josiah, about 621 B. C. All allow to David many less than the seventy-three psalms ascribed to him in the Bible superscriptions; Ewald fifteen, Stanley a few more, Kuenen and Oort not one. Professor Robertson Smith, a Scotch Presbyterian in good and regular standing, is sure that two are David's, and his entire article on the Bible in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which is a cautious publication, is in almost perfect sympathy with the Dutch Old Testament and the Tübingen New Testament criticism.

The most characteristic feature of the Dutch Old Testament criticism is the assignment of the "Book of Origins" or "Elohistic document," the priestly and levitical parts of the Pentateuch, to a period subsequent to the Babylonian exile, nearly two centuries later than Deuteronomy, whereas Ewald assigned it to the time of Solomon. The critical difference here is important, but there is no

moral difference that Ewald should be esteemed a saint and Kuenen the chief of sinners. Ewald's date is three hundred and Kuenen's is six hundred later than Moses. But in either case the document is equally un-Mosaic. One must go to Kuenen's "Religion of Israel" for the argument for this revolutionary opinion. His forthcoming "Historico-Critical Enquiry into the Old Testament Writings" will be further confirmation. Even this opinion was no sudden discovery. Zunz, of Berlin, the acknowledged patriarch of Jewish scholarship, came to the same conclusion independently of Kuenen, to whom Oort and Graf furnished the germs which he has fructified into a consistent theory. Such an interpretation of the Old Testament involves a new interpretation of Hebrew and Jewish history. But it is an interpretation much more favorable than that which has been commonly received. It finds in every period a natural preparation for that immediately succeeding. There is nowhere any break, not even between Malachi and Paul. The gulf between the Old and New Testaments is filled in, and the ideas of Jesus are accounted for, if not his genius. But if genius must be regarded as supernatural, unless its genesis and exodus can be traced to ancestral and other sources, surely Shakespeare and some others, as well as Jesus, must be remanded to the supernatural order.

JOHN W. CHADWICK.

DR. HENRY C. POTTER'S ESSAY.

An Examination of the Mythical Theory—Who Wrote the Canonical Books, if their Reputed Authors did not?—Dutch Criticism a Revolt Against the Theory of Mechanical Inspiration—The Bible a Supernatural Revelation, but Not a Fetish.

The title of "The Bible for Learners" is unfortunate. If it had been called "New Readings of an Old Book," "The Myths of the Bible," "The Bible for Rationalists," or "The Old and New Testaments with the Supernatural Element Eliminated," any one of these titles would have been an approximately correct description of the work. But the treatment which the Bible receives at the hands of Drs. Oort, Hooykaas and Kuenen, however kindly and devout in its tone (and it would be unjust not to recognise this characteristic), is, if it can be sustained as destructive of the claim of the Bible to be the Book, the depository of a divine revelation, as though it were the work of Strauss himself.

It is unnecessary in these columns further to describe its character. This work is the result of the teaching of the Tübingen school, and proceeds in its treatment of the two Testaments upon what is known as the mythical theory of their origin. That theory has been defined with abundant explicitness by the Dutch divines who are the authors of "The Bible for Learners" in the following words taken from the preface:

"As a rule they [the authors of the books of the Bible] concerned themselves very little with the question whether what they narrated really happened or not; and their readers were just as far from exercising what is now known as historical criticism. [It would be interesting to know on what evidence this last assumption is based.] If a narrative was edifying, if its tendency fell in with the tastes of its readers, then they called it true. . . . Thus a legend might serve the purpose of the writers just as well as the true account of something that really happened. This is why the Old and New Testaments are so full of legends."

So much for the position of our authors. What have those of us who hold the Bible to be an inspired book and the record of a veritable history to say in reply to it? This much, surely (for the limits of this article must needs limit our reply), if no more, that the existence of those legends or myths which we find in the New Testament, for instance, must somehow be accounted for. Who invented them?

How long a time sufficed for their creation? How soon did they appear in that precise and definite shape in which we have them in the four Gospels? What were those conditions in the age and land in which they appeared which were favorable to their invention? Or, to bring these questions to a direct and practical focus, how on the legendary or mythical theory can we account for the character of Christ as we find it delineated in the pages of the Evangelists? It is the position of those whose opinions are illustrated in "The Bible for Learners" that while there are in the Gospels a few grains of historic truth, the great bulk of what they contain is a "spontaneous growth, which sprung up in the bosom of the Christian society in the last seventy years of the first century," and that "by means of a number of mythical and legendary inventions, and a succession of developments, a good and holy Jew named Jesus was metamorphosed into the divine Christ of the Evangelists."

But how? By whose hands? Through whose instrumentality? A "legendary invention" implies an inventor, a mythical portraiture implies the hand that portrayed it. I use the word "portraiture" advisedly. Any one who reads the four Gospels must acknowledge that they present to us (pre-eminently the first three of them) a picture which has in it a real and essential unity. Whether we look at the teaching or the miracles, the life or the doctrine, each appears somehow related to the other, and all, taken together, go to make up a clearly and distinctly defined portraiture. The often uttered objection to modern lives of Christ that we have, in the New Testament, the best life of Christ is an implicit recognition of this fact. It will not be denied that any one reading the four Gospels for the first time would recognise in their pages the delineation of a character thoroughly grand and majestic, unique and striking from whatever point it might be viewed, and of pre-eminent beauty and nobleness. Is there any other character with which we should care to compare it? Will we place it beside the Prometheus of Æschylus or the

grandest of Shakespeare's characters? But did either Æschylus or Shakespeare write only to be forgotten? Have the children of their imagination survived while the names of the authors have disappeared? Is it likely that if the Christ of the four Gospels had been the creation of some one who wrote during the last half of the first (so-called) Christian century all traces of his identity would have vanished? I do not forget that St. Paul has been put forward as this writer, and that his remarkable gifts have been urged as explaining so remarkable a creation. But this assumption has to deal with facts and phenomena so utterly fatal to it that it can hardly be said to be any longer seriously urged. And if St. Paul was not, who was the author of this ideal portraiture? Who conceived and sketched this matchless character? To whose incomparable skill do we owe it that, while the moment you open what are called the Apocryphal Gospels (which were the fruit of a devout but none the less diseased imagination in the early Christian centuries), you are confronted with a mass of fables equally childish, frivolous and inconsistent, on the other hand, when you read about the miracles which Jesus wrought, and turn to the truths which he taught, there is, running through the whole, a singular dignity, elevation and consistent grandeur and beauty? Who was the poet who dreamed this matchless poem, and why have we lost even the faintest tradition of his name?

But it will be answered that that portraiture which we have in the Gospels was not the product of any one hand, but of many, and that the precise position of the disciples of the mythical theory is, that certain religious enthusiasts, toward the close of the first Christian century, gathered together the various legends and tales that were drifting to and fro among the early Christian churches, and wove them into that portraiture which we have in the pages of the Evangelists.

Now, then, we know something of the men who were concerned in laying the foundations of the Christian Church, and for our present purpose it does not greatly matter whether we take their own account of themselves, or that estimate which has been put upon them by the school of critics by whom our Dutch authors of "The Bible for Learners" have been inspired. According to the former they were "ignorant and unlearned men," though with some marked and signal exceptions. According to the latter, they were credulous enthusiasts, carried away by mere feeling,

easily deceived and fertile only in a feeble and foolish inventiveness. And yet such men first created the several myths out of which the four Gospels later grew, and others who followed them collected and arranged these myths and pared them down or filled them out till they reached their present proportions.

It is interesting to see how far such an hypothesis will stand the test of a closer scrutiny. The history of the origin and growth of myths is not so vague and indefinite a matter that we cannot form some general judgments about it. Myths have been made the subject of profound study and reflection. And as a result certain general conclusions about myths may be said to have received general and cordial recognition. One of them is that the number of original myths is surprisingly small, and that the mythology of races, the more closely it is studied, reduces the *species*, so to speak, to an exceedingly small number of *genera*. In his "Primitive Manners and Customs" Farrer has a section on Comparative Folk-Lore which is especially interesting in this connection. Again, another conclusion is that a myth is a thing of extremely slow growth, and oftener than otherwise takes many centuries, especially if it be a religious myth, for its full development. But if these positions are to be relied upon we are constrained to ask, first, from what primitive myths were those of the Gospel evolved and developed? and, second, how are we to account for their complete and perfect development within the very century that saw Christ crucified? Let the question of the date of the four Gospels be left as indefinite as the objector chooses, there is no question that at least four of St. Paul's letters (those to the churches at Rome, Corinth (2) and Galatia) were in existence within thirty years of the date at which the Christian world places the Resurrection. And when I say that there is no question about this fact I mean no question in the minds of even the most extreme disciples of the Tübingen school. Now, in these four letters there are implied and incidentally affirmed the essential facts of the life of Christ as that life is portrayed in the Gospels. In other words, within thirty years after the death of Jesus those myths, out of which his biography as we have it in the pages of the Evangelists was compiled, were completely and symmetrically developed! If they were, then it is a phenomenon so essentially miraculous that it would seem that we have only turned the supernatural out of one door in order to let it in at another.

But, again, these myths, having been matured and perfected within thirty years after the death of Christ, were collected and pieced together into the portraiture which we have to-day by the unknown authors of the four Gospels. Let us hold fast, at this point, to our figure, and turn with it for a moment from the world of letters to the world of art. Some of the readers of the *EVENING POST* have seen Raffaele's picture of the Madonna di San Sisto. It is doubtful whether any other painting has ever produced a more profound effect upon even the most casual observer. Certainly no one who has ever noticed at all attentively the expression of the eyes of the infant Jesus can have been unmoved by it. But this feature in the picture is only one of many. The attitude of the Virgin, the very drawing of the arm which holds her child, her own expression, the drapery of her figure, the up-looking cherubs at the foot of the picture—all these separate parts of the composition have an obvious and definite relation to the picture as a whole. In a word, there is in it a conspicuous unity of design and of execution. The original conception, the sentiment, the drawing, the very atmosphere of the picture, imply one originating mind and hand. But suppose, in view of the uncertainty as to certain facts and dates in the history of Raffaele, that it should be said that this picture was the product of no one mind or hand, but of many, that it was not an isolated and completed work, but that it was a gradual growth, one feature being conceived and painted by one hand and another by another; one figure having been drawn by this unknown artist and another by that; the drapery, the coloring, the accessories, each owing their existence to a different imagination and a different workman; is it difficult to anticipate the kind of welcome which such an attempt to account for the existence of the Madonna di San Sisto would receive? And yet we are bidden to explain the existence of that portraiture of Christ which we have in the Gospels by an hypothesis even more absurdly grotesque and inadequate. It is a more rational as well as easier alternative to believe that that portraiture is simply the story of a life that was lived, and of mighty works which were actually and veritably wrought.

On the other hand, the evidences that the Gospels are not myths but veritable memoirs are, when we come to look into them, so various, so mutually confirmatory, and so conclusive, that in view of the progress of exe-

getical scholarship an attitude of unbelief was never so difficult as to-day. A fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford, the Rev. Charles Row, in a volume entitled "*The Jesus of the Evangelists*," has illustrated this with singular vigor and conclusiveness, and his work will abundantly reward any one who will read it. Its aim is to show that the narratives which we have in the New Testament thoroughly satisfy the conditions of history, and break down under the tests which belong to fiction. It is, for instance, one of the conditions of a veritable history that its various parts or incidents shall go to confirm and verify each others. Of such confirmations it is almost impossible even to enumerate all those which are to be found in the books of the New Testament. Students of apologetics are familiar with the line of argument pursued in Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, in which are pointed out the undesigned coincidences between the Epistles of St. Paul and the history known as the Acts of the Apostles. Admirable as that work is, it only indicates a kind of proof which may be multiplied almost indefinitely. Take, for example, the following instance: In the account of the occurrences which ended in the death of John the Baptist we have a record of the successive incidents, given with the exactness of an eye-witness. The revelries which assembled Herod, his "lords, high captains and chief estates," the dancing of Herodias's daughter, the rash promise of the king, Salome's consultation with her mother and her subsequent demand for John's head, the instructions to the executioner, and the carrying out of his orders—all these things are told as though they were known to one who was present. Yet it was most improbable that any of John's disciples could have been present in the palace. The reporter "sitting in the chief seats" and the journal which published his reports were equally unknown to Herod's court or Herod's generation. And if they had been known, how could a reporter have learned those conscience-stricken words which, long after, Herod utters in the utmost privacy when he hears of Christ. "It is John whom I beheaded. He is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him." If there is anything in the New Testament which on the face of it looks like an invention, it is the element of detail in this particular narrative. Arguing on general principles, we should say that this minute record of words spoken by different persons under conditions most unfavorable to any knowledge of them by others

than those present at Herod's banquet casts a distinct shadow of improbability upon the whole story.

But when we turn from the Gospel in which that story is told to another, that of St. Luke, we find in an entirely different connection the mention of a single name that gives us the key to the whole perplexity. In St. Luke's account of Christ's last journey to Jerusalem he mentions that Christ was accompanied not only by his apostles, but also by certain women who ministered to him. Some of these are named, and among them is "Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward." We are not told when or how Joanna became a Christian disciple, nor is it of consequence to the narrative. But having done so, what was more natural than that she should tell the story of John's murder as she had heard it from her husband, Chuza. As Herod's steward he was one of the few persons who had access to the person of the King, and was almost certain to be present at his banquets. He it was who witnessed the dancing of Salome, and heard the King's oath, and was personally cognizant of the whole bloody history. He it was—is it not obviously natural and reasonable to suppose?—who communicated it to his wife, by whom later it was communicated to the evangelist. And he it was who, afterward, when Christ's ministry had become the subject of general remark, brings the rumors of it to his royal master, and hears then the guilty exclamation of the King, "It is John!" Thus it is the two incidents confirm and fortify each other; and thus it is all the way through that we encounter that incidental proof which is the characteristic of history, but which is utterly foreign to a myth or legend.

As I have indicated, this kind of evidence may be produced almost indefinitely. Its cumulative force is simply irresistible. As between the mythical theory of the Gospels and the historical theory it does not leave room for a rational doubt. The principles of criticism on which the authors of "The Bible for Learners" undertake to account for the two Testaments are utterly inadequate to explain their existence.

And here perhaps we might rest. But there remains something further to be said which is equally due to candor and truth. "The Bible for Learners" is one form of a revolt against that school of biblical criticism which has too long held sway over the great majority of orthodox students of the Bible. That school held to the mechanical inspiration of the Bible, and resented (and so far as

it may be said to have an existence, still represents) any estimate of the contents of the Bible which regarded a single word or line as anything else than the infallible word of God. In this estimate were included the titles of Psalms, the inscriptions at the close of the Epistles and the like, and behind it was a method of interpretation which treated every isolated text as of equal inspiration and authority. It was impossible that such a rule of interpretation could sustain itself. It was a fundamental misapprehension of the nature and office of a written revelation. And therefore, though the work of Bauer and his co-workers was begun in no kindly spirit, it has prepared the way for a criticism and exegesis of the two Testaments which is destined to issue in a more intelligent appreciation and reverence for that inspired truth of which they contain the record. Over against the work of Strauss and Bauer and Renan stands the work of Hofman and Delitzsch and their associates of the University of Erlangen. To their methods Delitzsch has given the felicitous name of "reproductive exegesis," as distinguished from the old method common alike to rationalists and evangelicals of the elder school, and best described as the "glossatory" method of interpretation. At the basis of Delitzsch's labors there is the broad principle of historic criticism, with its distinct recognition of the Bible as a progressive revelation to be read and interpreted in its historic sense. In its application there is the most frank and explicit recognition of the two elements, the human and the divine, in the Scriptures. It will be the worthy task of some future "Bible for Learners" to popularize the fruits of this historic criticism, and to give us a new biblical literature which shall recognise and demonstrate the presence in the Bible of the supernatural element without making of the book itself a mere fetic. "It is upon exegesis," says Delitzsch, "that the church of the future must be based." The Bible has nothing to fear and everything to hope from the closest and most exhaustive exegetical study of its contents. Let us rejoice that men like Luthardt and Steinmeyer and Delitzsch have been raised up to devote to it such study, and let us wait patiently and confidently until some competent hand shall bring together the results of their investigations and those of their compeers, and shall give them to the world in a compact, systematic and popular form. The Dutch "Bible for Learners" will then have found its fitting answer, and will, sooner or later, gravitate to its proper place.

HENRY C. POTTER.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE'S ESSAY.

The Disease of Critical Incredulity—The Agnostic Method of the "Faithful, Solemn Dutch Gentlemen" tested by Application to the Works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Virgil.

Volume 3 of "The Bible for Learners," "The Narratives of the New Testament," is a thick volume of 760 pages, and written with much diffuseness. It has the marks of honest, careful study and a serious desire to find out the truth concerning Jesus. In the results attained it takes its position with the agnostic school. The agnostics in criticism are those who are so afraid to accept the popular historic belief that they find it difficult to believe anything. They are like those very conscientious people who are so afraid of doing wrong that they abstain from doing what is right.

This school of critics has a very considerable influence at the present time. Its outcome, however, is so purely negative that its days are necessarily limited, not by the antagonism of its opponents, but by its own defects. When you have shown that the whole New Testament history is uncertain or improbable, what remains for you to do? Plainly, your task is at an end.

This agnostic tendency is evidently the backward swing of the pendulum from the old dogmatic tendency. Theological criticism during many centuries was wholly occupied in proving that everything in the Bible history was literally true. Taking its stand on the doctrine of infallible verbal inspiration, it was obliged to reconcile all contradictions, to explain away all errors, and to remove all inconsistencies. The Gospels, for example, could not contradict each other, and must not contain a mistake of any kind. To make this seem probable required an immense outlay of ingenuity. And this has been the occupation of biblical critics from the days of the Reformation till now.

At last the whirligig of time has brought its revenges. Having believed everything, the critics now find it hard to believe anything. Such is the state of mind of these faithful, solemn Dutch gentlemen, whose work is before us. They are afflicted with the disease of critical incredulity. To show to what extent this is carried I can only, in my present limits, call attention to a few of their habits of thought. And in doing this I will confine

myself to the question of the authenticity of the four Gospels.

Now it is well known that the four Gospels, essentially as we now possess them, have been received by the Christian Church since the middle, or at least the end, of the second century, as derived from the authors whose names they bear. This was the Christian belief in all parts of the Roman Empire. These four Gospels were the historic authorities for the facts of Christianity in Asia, Africa and Europe. And from that time forward the Gospels are quoted by writers in the third century so freely and fully that if the four Gospels were lost they could be almost or quite restored from the writings of Origen, Irenæus and Tertullian. These three authors all lived near the beginning of the third century. They lived, one in Egypt, another in France, the third in Carthage. They all accept these four books as coming unquestionably from the time of the Apostles.

Now, how do we know that the works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and Virgil came from these writers? Only because from the earliest times they have been ascribed to them, without any question or doubt. Suppose some modern critic should assert that they were the work of subsequent authors, and did not come from those whose names they bear; and suppose these critics should pay no attention to this chain of unbroken tradition, but give as a reason for their doubts that they found in the writings themselves much which made it appear improbable that they came from these sources; then suppose that they should calmly assume the case settled, and speak of these books as "certainly," "unquestionably," "without doubt" written by some persons a century or more later than the time of the assumed writers, should we not say that this was trifling with historic evidence, and was the very ultraism of critical incredulity?

But this is exactly what the school of destructive criticism does with the books of the New Testament. It does not condescend to take any notice of the universal belief of antiquity as to their origin. It looks through

them and says, "This is quite an improbable statement," "this fact seems unlikely," and on such grounds as these it teaches "learners" that they must not look for historic facts in this or that book.

That a certain statement seems to Dr. Oort and Dr. Hooykaas "improbable," is their only reason, usually, for rejecting it, and treating the book which contains it as apocryphal. When we consider that half the things which occur would have been deemed improbable beforehand; when we think how much of life consists of events most unlikely to happen, this does not seem quite a sufficient reason for rejecting the books which were universally received by those who had so much better means of knowing about them than we have. And when we also consider that what seems improbable to one man may appear very reasonable to another; and that what seems improbable to us in one light may become likely in another—it ought, one would think, to prevent so much stress being laid on that argument.

The following passages illustrate the quiet dogmatism with which our authors assume the certainty of their own conclusions: "We must never forget that the majority of the writings of the New Testament were not really written or published by those whose names they bear." "The two letters to Timothy and the letter to Titus were certainly composed long after the death of Paul." The Epistles of James and Jude "are incorrectly ascribed" to them. "The First Epistle of Peter was not written by the Apostle whose name it bears." The three epistles ascribed to John, we are informed, "belong to a later age." Of the gospels and book of Acts our authors say: "Alas! not one of these five books was really written by the person whose name it bears, and they are all of a more recent date than their headings would lead us to suppose." As regards the book of Acts, they say that it contains an inaccurate account which "is not the result of accident or ignorance, but of deliberate design." The fourth Gospel, which has been received in the church from the earliest times as coming from the beloved disciple, is, we are told, entirely unauthentic; and "we need never consult it" for the history of Jesus. All the wonderful and tender words of Christ in this Gospel were therefore inventions of an anonymous forger a hundred years after. The conversations with the woman of Samaria, with Mary and Martha, with the disciples in the last hours of his life, are simple inventions of this heavenly liar, this

divine falsifier of the second century. This is assumed on the strength of a supposed discrepancy of style and thought between the first three Gospels and the fourth.

But let us look for a moment at this reasoning. Our authors consider the Fourth Gospel an unquestionable invention of some anonymous writer in the second century, for the following reasons:

1. "In the first three Gospels Jesus teaches in proverbs or parables; in John in profound disquisitions."

But may not Jesus have spoken in parables to the simple people in Galilee, and in a different way to the learned scribes at Jerusalem?

2. "In the first three Gospels his words usually refer to the Kingdom of God; in the fourth he almost always speaks of himself."

May not this also be accounted for by the difference in his audience and his object in the two places?

3. "In the former he is said to have lived in Galilee alone till within a few days of his death; in the latter we find him frequently at Jerusalem."

As, until the last Passover, Jesus went to Jerusalem only as a private Jew, to attend the feasts, and worked no public wonders there, the first three Gospels would naturally be silent about those visits. John, with a deeper nature, was more receptive of the sort of conversation which Jesus necessarily had with the thinkers and scholars at Jerusalem, and has therefore recorded them.

4. "In the former he speaks and acts as an Israelite; in the latter he separates himself sharply from the people of Israel."

This is far from being the fact.

5. "In the former his character gradually develops; in the latter he is perfect from the beginning."

The development is uncertain; the perfection ascribed to him is John's own view of his total character.

6. "John gives us a wholly different view of Christ from that of the Synoptics"

This is true to a large extent. The accounts are different but not contradictory. The first three Evangelists saw and described more of the outward life of Jesus. The fourth describes more of the inward life.

But we notice exactly the same phenomenon in the account given of Socrates by Xenophon on the one side and Plato on the other. The one gives a more realistic view, the other a more ideal view of Socrates. But no one ever thought, not even the critical and sceptical Mr. Grote, that Plato's view was to be set aside as unhistoric. It is explained by the

different qualities of the two disciples in each case.

I have only had space briefly to describe the exaggerated tendency of these authors to negative criticism. There is much which is interesting and useful in their book, to one who is capable of reading it with a constant allowance for this "personal equation" of

the writers. But this tendency is a very weakening one, and takes away much of the interest from any book. We are never much profited by being told of defects and errors. The part of a book which benefits us is its affirmative side, not its negative.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

DR. DAVID H. WHEELER'S ESSAY.

The Controlling Force of Preconceived Notions—The Personal Equation which needs to be Eliminated from the Work of the Dutch Doctors—The Critics not Learners, but Special Pleadings.

"The Bible for Learners" will startle many people who through it obtain their first knowledge of a set of conclusions which a number of learned theologians profess to have reached in the course of their critical studies. The data for these conclusions are not given, except in the form of statements which purport to give facts, but really give only conclusions which are still sharply and vigorously contested. In short, the writers of this work interpret the Bible by the dogmatic use of a body of contested principles resting upon disputed facts. The shock produced upon the mind of a real learner is considerable because the most astonishing statements are made as if no sensible human being could doubt them. The authors are dogmatists with a new canon of criticism. So soon as the real state of the question—as still in dispute—is made known, much of our surprise disappears. The writers in this book are applying their new system to instruction, and assuming that their system is sound. There is a flavor of impudence about it; but a dogmatist is necessarily an impudent person.

The dispute respecting the origin of the Gospels and other New Testament books has of late inclined to a settlement in favor of the old orthodox opinion that the early Church was not humbugged respecting the authorship of these books, and this settlement is favored by our knowledge of the *à priori* of the new school of critics. The authors of "The Bible for Learners" have certain assumed principles to establish. Their studies were conducted to make out a case for their general theory. If

they had not found in the Bible some things that offended them, or at least troubled them, we should not have been favored with their polemical inductive proceedings to discover the truth. The most pronounced of these intellectual disturbances was caused by the supernatural element in the Bible; and one of the *à priori* of this "Bible for Learners" is the incredibility of a supernatural incident. It is a general rule in intellectual action that a man's *à priori*—the principles which he holds to be sound and of general validity—affect all his reasoning and (even insensibly) mould his studies and judgments. No man who firmly believes that supernatural incidents are incredible will be able to listen judiciously to evidence in favor of a supernatural story; and he will accept poor witnesses and stammering statements against the record which contains supernatural elements. We do not deal unfairly with these writers in this statement, for they announce their belief that the supernatural stories of the Bible were an after-growth, and not a contemporaneous record, before they found what they call their proof.

When we consider the powerful influence of an *à priori* rejection of miracles, we need not be surprised that those who hold this *à priori* have questioned in minute detail and challenged every writer of the New Testament with dogmatic confidence. Nor need we be surprised that some proof is furnished on some points. The study of the age in which the Gospels were written is not easy, and we notice that the critical school have had to shorten their labor by a new

and subordinate set of *à priori*. They tell us that the age knew nothing of literary accuracy and honesty; that good men easily put other and more powerful names to their books; that these writers lied with a perfect facility even while speaking with pure motives; that a controversial motive existed in the writers of the New Testament which projected the well-meant lies which they told along lines leading to desired conclusions. All which requires about as much faith as an average miracle. This combination of childish simplicity, cool reasoning, and literary skill in constructing a plausible story is rather hard for our faith. Nobody would have been asked to exercise so robust a belief as it requires if the *à priori* rejection of miracles had not impelled the inventive faculties to search for a possible explanation of the story upon the *à priori* principle which the critic entertained.

The "learner" who is new to this study will be surprised to learn that he is required to believe that these New Testament writers both lied and told the truth, and that the wise doctors who wrote this book know where the New Testament lies and where it tells the truth. The real task of the book, if it had to array the evidence, would begin here. It aims to preserve and dignify the Jesus of whom we learn mostly by means of these New Testament books. We are told that "we are ignorant of the true history of the life of Jesus;" and yet the "learner" who reads this is asked to believe that "the truth revealed by Jesus * * * will build up our character and confirm our moral power." If the critic had gone on to conclude that, since we cannot know the true history of Jesus, we need not trouble ourselves any longer about that history, we might have had some remnant of respect for his judgment; but when he tells us that out of a mass of lies he is going to pick the real truth of "a history which cannot be known," we see at once that a vigorous dogmatism, serving the cause of an *à priori* creed, has shaped all the tools that are used to test the Gospels and prepared all the special conclusions. Before study the student has believed in a Jesus who taught a pure moral doctrine and did not work miracles or claim a divine commission. To dispose of the supernatural the student become a critic had to condemn the New Testament writers; to rescue the man Jesus from the ruins of the Gospels this critic has to build up the story again according to his notion of what it should have been at the first. This singular task is accomplished by

use of scholarship dogmatically employed; but our judgment about it is not coerced into assent by finding scholarship in the critic, because we know its subordinate rank in the field; that the conclusion was established before a stroke of work in the study; and that this reconstruction of an incredible story by selection of what we like is an unliterary and pretty nearly absurd business. A good example of this selection of what we like in the Gospels appears in a volume of sermons (delivered at Oxford, England, last year) in which there is a sermon on the text "What manner of man is this?" The preacher holds the theory of the authors of "The Bible for Learners," and preaches his sermon in sublime contempt of the rest of the sentence—"that even the winds and the seas obey him." If "What manner of man is this?" belongs in the record, the rest of it does, because this "rest of it" is required to account for the asking of the question. The authors of this book do not believe that this particular question was asked in such circumstances; and the preacher formed by study of "The Bible for Learners" will begin his sermon by saying: "Brethren, this incident is a beautiful myth, the Gospels are a collection of beautiful myths, but Jesus was the noblest of men, and those who lived in his society must often have asked the question in the text—I mean in the part of the question which I select for your instruction in righteousness. The rest of the question is pure myth." And why? Because, in the words of our critics, "we shall unconditionally reject everything even in our canonical Gospels which contradicts nature or the humanity of Jesus."

We perceive the presence of an *à priori* judgment in this work in what is accepted as truth as well as in what is rejected as false. Certain parables are declared to be of undoubted authenticity. Why? Certainly not because they are in the record, for the record is declared to be unworthy of confidence, and much of it is condemned in detail. The record is credited when it tells us that Jesus prayed. There is a semblance of enthusiasm on this point. "Prayer strengthened him for all things," we are told. And then the walking upon the raging sea, after prayer on the lonely mountain, is taken up, and the conclusion reached that the underlying truth is that Jesus walked "on the raging billows of the world" in the might of prayer! Why this conclusion? There were no eye-witnesses on the mountain; there is not any indestructible evidence that Jesus prayed. There were eye-witnesses on

the sea, and both statements—that he walked on the billows and that he had prayed on the mountain—come to us from the same record. I can understand a critic who rejects the testimony that Christ prayed. It is the weakest part of the story, because he prayed alone. But it is precisely this weakest point which is accepted by these Dutch critics. Their *à priori* admit, and indeed require, that Jesus prayed often alone; these *à priori* exclude any miraculous work done by Jesus. It is true that our critics attach no importance, no authenticity, to any particular statement about Christ's prayers. That he prayed on a particular day before and after certain other events, in this or that place, they do not believe; but they do believe that he was a man of prayer who obtained his strength by an heroic faith and fortitude. On what evidence? These prayers are believed in *à priori*; the facts in which they lie imbedded in the record are set aside, and the prayer-fact (at given time and place) is equally discredited. But then, "our theory" asserts that Jesus prayed a great deal!

We see the same *à priori* method in the treatment of the resurrection of Jesus. These critics frankly tell us that "the return to earth of one already dead and glorified, or the veritable apparition of a spirit, is a thing which far transcends the limits of credibility." And yet they feel bound to make something of all that mass of statements respecting the

resurrection; and so they tell us that the friends of Jesus probably had visions of their departed Master—and that, they think, was easy enough to excited minds! Here is *à priori* with a vengeance. Why? Because the epistle to the Corinthians has been graciously excepted from the general ruin, and Paul is permitted to say that several (at one time five hundred) persons saw the risen Christ. But they think he must have meant visions, though he goes into a long discussion about its importance! These Dutch gentlemen are paid by the state to teach religion, and they must keep some little religion to teach, but they keep as little as possible.

One need not be a scholar to expurgate Jesus upon the plan of the authors of the third volume of "The Bible for Learners." He has only to resolve, as they have done, not to receive anything that "contradicts nature"—that is, his experience of nature, and what he knows, outside of the Gospels, of other men's experience of nature—"or the humanity of Jesus," and to believe all the rest of the New Testament. The scholarship is entirely unnecessary; one does not expurgate the record because he is a scholar, but because he refuses to believe in the supernatural upon the testimony of New Testament writers, to whom he gives credit in so far as they relate what he wishes to believe.

DAVID H. WHEELER.

DR. JOHN COTTON SMITH'S ESSAY.

The Influence of the Zeit-Geist—Why the Supernatural Element in the New Testament offers a Difficulty—The Reasonableness of Miracle and its Possible Harmony with Scientific Conceptions of Uniform Law—Universal Mind vaster than the Universe of Phenomena—The Origin of Narrow Naturalism.

This book, while it is evidently the work of men of learning and ability, contains nothing which is new or startling to one familiar with recent German biblical criticism. It is simply a rendering of the story of the Bible, and especially the life of Christ, in the form which it assumes when rectified by the critical tests of such men as Strauss and the critics of the Tübingen school. The principle which governs this so-called rectification of the life of Christ (and it is of that alone that I shall speak) may be thus defined. The account as we now have it in the New Testament is the result of certain mythical additions to the actual history of Christ, and of the antagonism and final reconciliation of the Judaic and Gentile tendencies in the early church. In accordance with this principle the supernatural and miraculous element is excluded as unhistorical, and we have in the New Testament only what are called "Tendenz-Schriften," or books written under the influence of a "tendency" either of the Judaic or the Gentile school, and that their accuracy, therefore, is more or less liable to suspicion.

In what I shall say in regard to this rendering of the life of Christ I shall have but one purpose, and that is to relieve, if possible, the minds of any whose belief in historical Christianity and the Catholic faith is at all disturbed by this sort of criticism.

"The Bible for Learners" would have little influence were it not that its method of interpretation happens to fall in with two prevalent tendencies of the present day—the one to a destructive criticism of ancient writings, and the other to a denial of the miraculous and supernatural altogether. But these tendencies, to which this book is so much indebted for any influence it may have, it must be remembered, are only temporary in their character. The destructive criticism has been a literary fashion, not without valuable results, but we already witness a decided reaction in the school; and the denial of the supernatural is the result simply of the prevailing materialism of this age, which, as it has succeeded to the transcendentalism

of the last generation, so it will be followed, in all probability, by the transcendentalism of the next. The supernatural will, no doubt, again be, in some form, the fashion of the day.

Being thus on our guard against the too great influence of the *Zeit-Geist*, or special spirit of our time, let us see how Dr. Hooykaas—by whom the New Testament portion of "The Bible for Learners" was prepared—makes out with his theory.

If the story of Christ is the result of mythical growth and of the conflict and final reconciliation of tendencies in the early church, then a long period of time must have elapsed before the story assumed its present form. This of course has been maintained by the critics of the Tübingen school, and their great leader, Baur, held that the four Gospels had their origin in the latter part of the second century. This would give time, under favorable circumstances, for the growth of a mythical story and for the development of the hostile "tendencies" in the church.

But this view meets with serious difficulties at the outset. The critics of this school have materially altered their position in this respect. No one of them, I believe, now pretends to deny that St. Luke's Gospel—no matter by whom written—must have preceded Marcion, and must therefore be earlier than 125 A. D. Volkmar holds that the first three Gospels were written before 110 A. D. Hilgenfeld admits that what is called St. Matthew's Gospel may go back to a time previous to 80 A. D., and that the Apostle himself may have had a hand in its authorship. Matthew Arnold maintains that the fourth Gospel must have originated in the time of St. John, and that it was probably written by St. John himself, and afterward revised by one or more of his disciples. I have made no use, it will be noticed, of the views, in regard to the dates of the Gospels, of the many admirable scholars who hold the supernatural origin of Christianity. I have referred only to the admission of those by whom its supernatural origin is denied. The inevitable conclusion which we reach is that

the destructive criticism has broken down, and that the reconstructed story of the life of Christ, which has been given us in "The Bible for Learners," rests upon a foundation which has been shattered by the very school of critics by whom it was originally laid.

But although the earlier dates of the Gospels are conclusively established, and the impossibility of the growth of the story of Christ satisfactorily shown, there is another view of the subject which rests upon undeniable facts and which is fatal to the theory of "The Bible for Learners." For whatever may be the date of the Gospels, all admit that there are certain epistles of St. Paul which were written within twenty or thirty years after the death of Christ, and that, within half a dozen years after that event, St. Paul was in intimate relations with the original disciples of Christ. Now these epistles of St. Paul are inexplicable unless the story of Christ, substantially as we have it in the Gospels, was current and well known in his time and at the period of his conversion. These letters of St. Paul are pervaded through and through with the supernatural and divine nature of Christ, and with his resurrection, in the body, from the dead. They are unquestionably based upon the facts which he learned, or the story which was told to him, in regard to Christ, at the time of his conversion to Christianity. But if this was the case then the supernatural story was not a growth from any sources whatsoever, but was the story which was current immediately upon the death of Christ.

There is a still further consideration important in this connection. There has scarcely, if ever, been a time so unfavorable to the growth of a mythical story as the very period which followed immediately after the life of Christ. It was the time of the decline of faith, when the ancient religions were losing their hold upon the belief of mankind. It was a scoffing, sceptical age—ever urging the sneering question of Pilate, caring for no answer. "What is truth?" All the conditions favorable to the growth of a mythical story were conspicuously absent. Notice, in confirmation of this statement, the utter failure of the miraculous stories in regard to Appolonius of Tyana to secure permanent belief. Even the miraculous stories which did grow up to a certain extent around the facts of Christian history failed to root themselves in the Christian consciousness, as did the central miracle of Christ himself. Mr. Froude, in his celebrated Sketch of Cæsar,

has furnished striking though perhaps unintentional confirmation of this view, when in his parallel between Cæsar and Christ he says that it was supposed by some that Cæsar had risen from the dead. In that age it was impossible that a mythical story, even in regard to the great Cæsar, the founder of the Roman Empire, should live. How can we account for it, except upon the supposition of its historical truth, that the story as we have it in the Gospels of the obscure Jesus of Nazareth should have taken captive the whole Roman world? It was well said by the great Dr. Arnold that there has never been an age less adapted to the growth of a mythical story than the age of Tacitus.

The theory, therefore, upon which the reconstructed story of Christ is given in "The Bible for Learners" breaks down utterly and forever in these respects, to say nothing of any others. It depends upon an assumption of the late date of the Gospel story of Christ, which has been abandoned by the later writers of the school by which the theory was originally maintained. It cannot stand for a moment in the face of the universally admitted facts in regard to the Epistles of St. Paul, and it is so utterly inconsistent with the tone and temper of the world at that time, that it may without hesitation be pronounced to be a theory which has not the slightest historical or critical foundation.

It can hardly be supposed that any one would take critical exception to the history of Christ, as we have it in the New Testament, were it not for the supernatural and miraculous element which it contains. It is the history of an exceptional birth, an exceptional life, and an exceptional death. That is the difficulty with these critics, and is, we do not hesitate to admit, a difficulty with us, until these exceptional phenomena in Christ are brought into harmony with those ideas which have become fundamental with us, of universal and invariable order and law. Is the supernatural element as we call it in the life of Christ reconcilable with reasonable and, if you please, scientific opinions in regard to the system of things in which we live? That is the question which it is important for us finally to consider.

It is certainly reasonable for us to suppose that mind precedes and pervades all phenomena. Mr. Huxley himself says that he does not know whether he would most truly express the facts of nature in terms of matter or of spirit. It is reasonable to suppose that

this universal Mind inheres in a being infinitely wise and powerful and good. It is reasonable to suppose that the system pervaded and controlled by this universal Mind is vaster than the phenomenal universe, and that there is therefore a universe for the most part invisible to us, to which nevertheless we stand closely related. It is reasonable to suppose that the true and the right and the good may be objects of paramount importance in this infinite universe, visible and invisible, of which we form a part. It is reasonable to suppose that in order to connect us, in our consciousness, with the infinite universe, which rests upon the true and the right and the good, the higher order of this universe should in some way manifest itself in the phenomenal system in which we are now placed, to give us assurance of the eternal and immutable character of the true and the right and the good, and of our relationship with the invisible and infinite. It is reasonable to suppose that this was accomplished in Christ, in harmony with all laws of nature, by the operation of laws as absolute as those of gravitation or the correlation of forces. I say it is reasonable to suppose that this was accomplished in Christ, when we consider how wonderfully he is related to all history which preceded him, and how entirely all history since finds its explanation in him. In this view of the matter the exceptional birth and life and death of Christ take their place, in orderly relation,

according to a system of universal law, in the universe of which we form a part. The universal Mind it is reasonable to call God. It is reasonable to suppose that to him there is no distinction between the natural and the supernatural, but that he is equally present and active in both. It is reasonable to suppose that in this highest manifestation of the universal law, which we have in Christ, we have the solution of the mysteries of our being, and the assurance of victory over evil, and immortality in him.

The great difficulty in this matter is that men persistently fix their minds upon portions only of the universal system of truth, and so render themselves incompetent to grasp the vast relations which the life of Christ sustains to the visible and invisible universe, and settle down therefore, at last, into the narrow naturalism of the Dutch divines who have given us in "The Bible for Learners" their rendering of the life of Christ.

I could wish in closing to direct those who may desire to pursue this inquiry still further to some wise and safe guidance. There are many profoundly learned works on the subject which are unsuitable for ordinary use. If I were asked to say what is just now in my mind as best adapted for ordinary readers on this special subject, I should say the lecture of Professor Thayer of the Andover Theological Seminary on "Criticism Confirmatory of the Gospels," and the work of the late Dr. Horace Bushnell on "Nature and the Supernatural."

JOHN COTTON SMITH.

DR. RICHARD S. STORRS'S ESSAY.

The Natural Tendency of Men to Disbelieve whatever Transcends their own Experience and the Ease with which that Tendency is Misused—An Argument from the Internal Probability of the Gospels—The Fatal Consequences to Religion Itself of the Rejection of the Supernatural Element—A Little Story and its Application—"Three Persons and no God."

"The Bible for Learners" is hardly of special importance in itself. Judged by literary standards it has neither the light vivacity of M. Renan's "Life of Jesus," which gaily reduced the marvellous story of the Gospels to the level of an entertaining Parisian *feuilleton*, nor the strenuousness of purpose and the semi-scientific character which marked the earlier work of Dr. Strauss. The writer of this Dutch book simply assumes that whatever is supernatural in the common Christian view of the person and work of Jesus is unbelievable; and, after denying the historical authority of the writings on which that view is founded, he proceeds to pick out the separate bits which seem to him likely to have been true, rejecting the rest. Jesus, on his theory of the matter, was a gifted young Jew, who got lessons and inspirations from John the Baptist, though of finer spirit and genius than his teacher; who taught the people with extraordinary effect; who cured some persons of nervous diseases; who at length made the heroic resolve that in the absence of any one else to take the office he would himself be the Messiah; who thought with a shudder, when Mary anointed him, "Soon I shall be a corpse myself;" whose painful feeling at the Last Supper was an unfamiliar sense of distrust in the midst of his friends; who was killed in the inevitable crash of conflict which he had provoked with the party of the Pharisees; and of whom his disciples believed, without ground, in virtue of certain undefined reminiscences and impressions, that he had risen from the dead.

To make the New Testament correspond at all with this conception of the Lord of Christendom, it is necessary of course to treat it with great freedom; and so one is continually told: "Jesus cannot have used the language attributed to him;" "We see at once that it is not Jesus who speaks, but the man whose hand we have recognised so often in the third Gospel;" "If we take the discourse as it stands we cannot admit that any part of it was really uttered by Jesus, except certain opening words;" "Unquestionably there is truth at the foundation of this narrative, but

we cannot accept it as it stands." Apparently the enlightened common-sense of the Rev. Dr. I. Hooykaas is his rule for determining what fragments of the Gospels, if any, shall be accepted; and certainly his carefulness in admitting nothing which does not show itself sound, under the cautious Rotterdam calculations, might have given him distinction as a mechanical engineer.

Of course, such a book is easily made. It is as if a man should take up the theory that the earth is built of planks and scantling, and should thereupon deny the various facts, of granite and marble, of iron and coal, of internal heat and superficial solidity, with which the theory does not agree. This would not require much exactness of science, and a book written on such a basis would hardly be likely to have permanent importance. If judged by its intrinsic merits the book before us will scarcely have more. It simply represents an antecedent conception of the writer about the Son of God. The conception itself is neither novel nor rich. In fact, it is not even symmetrical, but, if one may apply to it a mathematical term, is essentially scalene, with sides and angles unequal to each other. The world must be poorer than it is in good books before this will gain any wide currency on its scholastic, philosophical, or literary deserts.

But while this is true, it is true also that as accepting and reinforcing the strong tendency of men to reject the supernatural—at least to deny any contact of it with human observation—the book will have influence. The existence of such a tendency all must admit. Men are naturally disposed to measure the experience of others by their own, and to distrust what claims to contradict or surpass it. It is so, not in the religious sphere only, but in the historical, or the scientific. The narrative of Marco Polo was rejected by multitudes, as showing falsehood on the face of it, to be ranked in the category in which we put the stories of Münchhausen. The vivid, harmonious, blending blooms of an American summer-garden, if correctly depicted in the ice huts of the Esquimaux, no doubt would excite an incredulous smile; and the wonders of the

telegraph, in our own time, have been accounted fraudulent fictions by those who had heard of but who had not seen, and who could not explain them.

In such cases, of course, the stress of evidence at last compels the reluctant mind to accept the facts which to the end it cannot comprehend. But it takes a vast pressure of evidence to overcome the strong primary contrary tendency, and to secure men's conviction of what entirely transcends their experience.

There is nothing surprising, then, in the inclination of many to discredit the stupendous story of the Gospels. When report is made of alleged facts utterly surpassing our experience, or that of others for eighteen centuries—such as the coming of a celestial Being into the world, heralded by angels, his resurrection and ascension, or either of his miracles—it is hardly more than matter of course that many will reject it, insisting on regarding it as grossly exaggerated or wholly untrue. Any volume which discusses it in this sense—seeking to explain in a natural way what has certainly surpassed all later observation—must be expected to gain passing currency.

It is to be observed, too, that this tendency increases instead of diminishing as civilization advances. The barbarian is at least aware of his ignorance, while the cultivated man is confident in his knowledge. The barbarian, therefore, easily believes in the supernatural; since the thunder of cannon, the flashing of messages over dumb wires, the sudden blaze of Bengal-lights beating the darkness out of the air, are to him about as marvellous as would be angels in the sky. But the civilized man, who has mastered occult forces in nature, who seems to himself to have explored its interior chambers, but before whom the miraculous yet remains inaccessible, finds it easy to reject, hard to believe this; and almost any attempt to explain it to him on a natural basis will be eagerly greeted.

This book, therefore, as it has had predecessors more important than itself, so it will be likely to have many followers. Any argument against it will fail with multitudes, because such argument cannot reverse that subtle and strong tendency of the mind to which it appeals. It is almost like the pull of the planet on the body—this pull of the natural, as distinguished from the supernal, upon the thought and spirit of man.

But as addressed to those who after consideration fully accept the Gospel-story such a book must be without noticeable force, because their entire thought on the subject lies

outside its range. They are perfectly sure that their experience offers no sufficient measure of universal forces and phenomena; that there may be—must be—a multitude of such, in a cosmos so immense and complex as this, which transcend altogether their limited observation and inquisitive philosophy. Indeed, the personal life in themselves, introspective, retrospective, when they thoughtfully regard it, is as mysterious as anything else. The creation of either planet or soul is an effect transcending as far as anything can their observation, or power of conception. And God's existence, in his infinite personality, is more absolute a marvel than any other which was ever declared. They are not therefore predetermined against the supernatural, or against its contact with the history of the world; though doubtless they must have proof, apt and ample, before admitting the reality of such contact.

The prime question with them is, "Was there an adequate purpose to be accomplished by such divine intervention in human affairs as the New Testament story involves?" and to this their answer is promptly affirmative. The dense and immense ignorance of God which prevailed in the world, growing darker and grosser as time went on; the want of certainty concerning existence beyond the grave; the want of assurance of the forgiveness of sin, though one should forsake it; the absence of all real help or hope for that supreme spiritual life which is rooted in righteousness and inspired by love, through which the soul gains beauty, power, and immortal beatitude; these, with other related facts, seem distinctly to call for such intervention. The New Testament story of angels and of Christ has, therefore, to them, probabilities behind it. The adverse presumption encountered by it might be invincible if it concerned mere celestial pyrotechnics, a dazzling display of radiant energy for the amusement or amazement of men. But it is nowise improbable—rather, assuming God's wisdom and love, the presumption for it becomes forcible—since the object of the wonders which it records was to give men a more luminous discovery of God, and to knit to him in filial relations their uplifted and purified souls.

What philosophy or poetry, governments, religions, arts, worships, or human examples, had not supplied, and could not supply, for man's inner righteousness, his vision of God, and his serene relations to him—that a supernatural Person came from heaven to earth to bring; this is the premise of the New Testament. Admitting, then, the existence—which

only the atheist can deny to be possible—of other ranks and realms of being than that with which our earthly experience makes us familiar, it is surely no rash or violent inference that if such an adequate occasion is presented these higher spheres may shoot bright influence into the lower, may cast gleams from themselves on terrestrial life to exalt and inspire, and to carry it toward celestial consummation.

The only subsequent question about the narratives which report this will concern the specific evidence for their truth. If that seem sufficient, there is no further difficulty in the way of admitting it, any more than in the way of admitting the proof of the existence of God, or of the primary work of creation.

That the evidence for the alleged facts recorded in the Gospels is sufficient, for minds which approach it from this side, the experience of centuries abundantly shows. The wisest, shrewdest, most cautious, have received it. The Protestant here unites with the Catholic. The Unitarian, of the old-fashioned sort, stands solidly side by side with his Trinitarian neighbor. There are more in the world to-day who accept it than there have been before since Jesus was born. Of course, the briefest *résumé* of such evidence would fill a volume. But there are two points connected with it which must impress any thoughtful mind.

One is, the perfect simplicity of the story; the utter absence of effort to magnify small things into great ones, or to color the narrative to suit any purposes of the narrator. The style of three of the Gospels, at least, is as artless as a child's respiration. It shows not the slightest embellishment or ambition. The narrator, in each case, seems to lose all consciousness of his own personality, in the astonishing story which he has to relate. There is no such rhetorical perspective in the record as there must have been if it had been planned by human minds. It is as if those who made it had been living in a realm of wonders, where nothing surprised, while nothing escaped them. The amazing things are as simply told as if they had been the commonest occurrences. The trifling circumstances are related as particularly as are the most unparalleled facts; as when Jesus is spoken of as having been asleep, in the hinder part of the boat, on a pillow, before he stayed the storm by a word; as when the multitudes are described as seated in companies, of fifties or hundreds, on the green grass, before their food is miraculously supplied. The whole atmosphere of the story

is transparent, without cloud or mirage. No legendary looming is anywhere upon it; no gilded aureole, or prismatic edging of fancy. Its delineations are perfectly achromatic; while still the entire narrative sparkles on the page, in its inartificial and unadorned grace, like a Syrian plain in morning light.

If the record referred to anything else than to facts supernatural, no one would hesitate to accept it as the most truthful, as it is the most charming, of human histories. Even Judas himself is visited by the evangelists with no special denunciation. His treachery is outlined, and his death; but the pen of the narrator is so engaged with the story that it stays for no comment.

The other fact connected with the Gospels, which makes them almost self-demonstrative, is that their picture of the principal Person presented by them is not only self-consistent—which would of itself be an astonishing thing, if fancy were painting a person superhuman in mortal conditions—but is intensely lifelike. It makes the strongest impression of reality. It shows not a line of studious stiffness. It has the traits and touches of a portrait, as truly as the picture of Julius II. by Raphael in the Pitti Palace, or of the burgomaster by Dürer in the Nuremberg Museum; as the bust of any emperor in the Vatican saloons.

The contrast here is as sharp as possible between the story of the Gospels and the apocryphal legends which succeeded. The latter seem palpable products of the human imagination. The picture of the Christ presented in the former—admitting the possibility of such a supernatural person, which only atheists can dispute—is as vivid and simple as a sun-picture. The legends themselves thus bear witness to the Gospels; as scratched and paltry crystals surrounding the diamond make its inestimable lustre more evident.

It is important to observe, too, that each part of this record is as essential as others to its completeness. It seems to be a favorite notion with some, as with the writer of this book, that it is possible to exclude from the Gospel-story whatever attributes to Jesus superhuman power, and still to retain the transcendent significance and splendor of his character. But the unwasting glory of that supreme character resides in the fact that its loveliness and its sacrifice coexisted with all the opportunity and temptation which men naturally associate with boundless power. If he suffered, gently and quietly, because he could not help it, there is nothing transcendent or unmatched in such patience. It was familiar before. It has been repeated, millions of

times, in men never heard of outside their own households. If he had no means of subsistence beyond the wages of an obscure trade and the charity of his friends, his want of ambition for earthly wealth was nowise remarkable. If he died because the anger of the Jews and the cowardice of Pilate proved too strong for him, so have others, by thousands, been beheaded, crucified, burned, shot, by an enraged power which they could not resist; and if he did not arise from the grave, but left his ashes to mingle indistinguishably with the dust of Palestine, it was simply audacious arrogance in him to claim to be the Lord of Life, as it has been the strangest folly of the world to set him apart from the other uncounted multitudes of the dead.

Whatever is supreme and divine in his character, most touching in its appeal to human sensibility, most uplifting to aspiration, has its condition in the fact that the power which the narratives all ascribe to him was his prerogative. If it lay in his choice to smite enemies to the dust, as when the officers fell before him, and he still bore insults without reply, his patience is transcendent. If he could have turned dust into jewels and gold by a motion of his will, while he still submitted to an absolute poverty, his disregard of worldly wealth is a lesson for mankind. His worn and soiled raiment becomes to his followers a divine vestment—it sheds a radiance on the garments of the poorest—only because when it was transfigured it shone as if woven of something more celestial than sunbeams. His act of lifting little children to bless them has nothing unique or surpassing in it except as we feel that the hands which touched them in that tender benediction held the power of miracles in their muscles. If he could have swept Pilate and the legionaries, the rulers and their mob, into the bitter brine of the Dead Sea, by a stroke of his will, but instead thereof submitted to insult and scourging, and the agony of the cross, then, and not otherwise, that cross becomes what Christendom has held it, the scene of a sacrifice of himself for the world inconceivably impressive. And only if he arose from the grave does that majestic utterance remain for us: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." The utter subordination of power to instruction, of the physical to the spiritual, of miracles themselves to moral persuasion, it is there set like a star in the glowing azure of his Ascension. But if he did not leave the sepulchre, to some later unknown forger belongs that illustrious and unworldly conception.

Indeed, one must go still further, and front without flinching the frightful conclusion that the estimate put upon himself by Jesus was absurdly exaggerated, it approached insanity, if he were in nature wholly like his disciples. If any credence can be given to either Gospels or Epistles he certainly taught that his place in the world was peculiar to himself, and beyond imitation; that others were messengers, he was the Master; that he had power to forgive human sin; that he was the light of the world, the resurrection and the life; that whoever had seen him had seen the Father, and that the visible heavens and earth were not so durable as his instruction and his kingdom. That a modest, truthful, self-contained man should say such things of himself, while conscious that in nature he was only the equal of any one around him—that he should even attribute to himself the tremendous office of Judge of the World, and arbiter of immortal destinies—it is simply incredible. Either his nature was above that of others, or his arrogance of pretension surpassed the wildest freaks of unreason. Only that foolish credulity concerning things without evidence which always comes to balance unbelief of things which are probable, can attribute to him such a transcendent character and such superlative offices, if in the constitution of his being he was but equal to Lazarus or Luke, or to the surprised and incredulous Thomas.

But if in him was a nature celestial, the whole character and work attributed to him become at once a seamless fabric, like that for which the soldiers cast lots. His spirit is then, not illustrious only, but world-commanding, because associated with this supreme personality. His words about himself—the very highest which the Gospels recite—are then only just. And the world has been educating as well as using its noblest moral and spiritual powers in offering to him a worship and homage which otherwise would have implied blasphemy on the one hand, or moral idiocy on the other.

How speedily that worship must cease if the theory of this book should be generally accepted, one cannot but see. It is called "The Bible for Learners." Suppose it universally adopted as such, and put in place of the discarded New Testament, in churches, Sunday-schools, chapels, missions, and Christian homes; that all should be taught that there were no angels over Bethlehem—that is a legend "without the smallest historical foundation;" that Jesus was only a Jewish babe, and wrought no super-

nal wonders—"the acceptation of the story lodges us in palpable absurdities;" that he died before middle life because his enemies overcame him; that he did not arise from the grave, but lies still, in whatever may remain of the crumbled body, amid the wreck of the sepulchre in the garden; and that only the stimulated fancy of a subsequent age ascribed to him supernatural power—one need not ask what would become of that personal consecration of life and soul to the loving and immortal Son of God which has been for centuries the glory of the world? or what would become of the joy and hope in this Divine Friend, which have solaced sorrow, lightened labor, and given victorious tranquillity in death? But what would become of our certainty of life, beyond the awful stillness of death? What of our knowledge of the character of God, in its supreme secrets of grace and grandeur? Whither would vanish that golden gleam on the world's history, which now flings lustre on myriads of minds, from the fact that such a celestial Person has entered it to exalt it? What would become of that animating sense of the dignity of man's nature which has been felt, with a growing intensity, since such a Being condescended to take that nature on himself? Whither would pass that amazing force which now, through the Gospels, converts the vicious, startles the indifferent, changes the savage?

All these effects, realized for ages, from belief in the Christ as a Lord supernatural, must infallibly disappear. His transcendent personality, his life of wonder, are their necessary basis. They could no more have been founded, they could no more be maintained, on a fraudulent or fortuitous collection of legends, than a pyramid of shapen rock, grander than the Egyptian, could be based and upheld on the dewy cobwebs of an autumn morning. The very worship of God must sooner or later lose vitality, if the testimony of Jesus has only a human authority for us, and we are remitted for our conceptions of the Infinite Sovereign to our own intuitions, and to dim and doubtful hints of science. A natural theism never yet has held its own against the impetuous passions of man. No human theories, about a supreme physical or psychical force, have the structural strength of positive revelation to resist the dissolvents of unbelief. And when the New Testament disappears from the world, as a record of marvels supernatural and divine, the assemblies which once it enlightened and quickened, if they should continue to be gathered, would be likely ere long to remind one of the saying attributed to Lord Houghton, as he came out from a meeting of London Comtists at which three speakers had developed the scheme of the French philosopher: "This is really the newest thing out in the way of a religion—three Persons, and no God!"

RICHARD S. STORRS.

DR. MARK HOPKINS'S ESSAY.

The Dutch Critics Self-Convicted of Unfitness for their Work—They Depart from “the Baconian Philosophy” and Dogmatically Beg the very Question they Propose to Discuss—Their Methods Turned against Themselves—How do they Know that the Jesus whose Spiritual Teaching they Accept ever Existed at All?—The Contrast between “the Mythical Jew of the Critics” and the Christ of the New Testament.

Looking at the positions taken by those who have put forth “The Bible for Learners” we notice first the extraordinary spectacle of men undertaking a task for which they virtually proclaim themselves unfit.

In common with positivists generally, these men not only affirm that supernaturalism and miracles are to be rejected, but they so assume their impossibility as to refuse to consider evidence in their favor; and it is their avowed object to eliminate them from the Bible. On the other hand, not only does the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New, affirm supernaturalism and miracles, but it assumes the first, and so affirms the last that they enter essentially into its whole structure. Accepting the plain statements of the Bible, not only was the annunciation of the birth of Jesus supernatural, and his birth itself, but the power of working miracles was made to be, as it should have been if he was the Christ, as natural to him as the power of breathing. This power Jesus himself claimed. He made it a proof of his mission, and he so exercised it as to show his mastery not only over every form of disease, but over the mightiest forces of nature, over the spirits of the unseen world and over death itself. If the writers of the New Testament, and Jesus also, were not believers in supernaturalism and in miracles then it is impossible that such a belief should be indicated by language. This has been the belief of Christians from the first, it is their almost universal belief now, and yet here are men who come to a criticism of the Bible with an avowed preconception which makes the rejection of miracles a foregone conclusion.

With a certain class of scientists supernaturalism and miracles have become more and more an offence, but no theological dogmatism ever exceeded that which assumes *a priori* that miracles are to be regarded as “unhistorical,” that is, that they cannot constitute a part of a true history. To say that is to beg the whole question. Than this no dogmatism can be more narrow, or more in opposition to the spirit of the Baconian philosophy. Perhaps there never was a more flagrant instance of the tendency of the human mind to pass

from one extreme to its opposite than we have in this extreme position in regard to miracles. Constantly referring us to the tendency in former times to regard as miraculous, events that we now refer to natural causes, and disregarding the truth that no natural tendency ever wholly misleads us, these men go, with a weakness quite equal to that which they despise, to the opposite extreme. In themselves, that is aside from what they imply, miracles are of little importance. The one important thing is the personality, the fatherhood, the loving interposition of God in behalf of his erring and sinful children; and miracles are important as the only adequate means of showing these. In fact any manifestation of God as personal is substantially a miracle. Revelation is itself miraculous, and hence miracles are not incidental, or needed simply as evidence, but they enter in as a part of the system. Take from Christianity the miraculous element and it would not be a religion. This element may not be scientific, but it is rational. In the view of a science that knows of nothing above nature and so can explain nothing, a miracle must seem impossible; but viewing nature as the theatre of a moral government and subordinate to that, miracles might be rationally expected if the exigencies of that government should demand them.

Entering thus, as miracles do, into the very substance of the Bible, it is self-evident that men who come to the criticism of it with an avowed presupposition which precludes any belief in them come to a task for which they proclaim themselves unfit. According to any rules of evidence received in our courts the opinions and conclusions of such men on such a subject cannot be relied on.

In looking again at the positions taken by these critics we notice that they do not leave themselves adequate evidence that such a person as Jesus Christ ever existed.

According to them no one of the writers of the New Testament ever saw him. “If,” say they, “we might really suppose them” (the five historical books) “to have been written by the men whose names they bear we should not hesitate to accept their narratives in the

main as substantially correct. But alas! not one of those five books was really written by the person whose name it bears." "The titles placed above them owe their origin to a later ecclesiastical tradition which deserves no confidence whatever." By whom then were these books written? Of that these men know, and claim to know, nothing. They know nothing of the name of the author of one of the books, or of the exact time at which he lived, or of his opportunities for knowing the truth. But while they do not know this, they do know, or rather claim to know, that the authors of these narratives, whoever they were, had little regard for the truth. "As a rule," they say, speaking in their preface of the authors of the books of the Bible, "they concerned themselves very little with the question whether what they narrated really happened or not; and their readers were just as far from exercising what is now known as historical criticism." What a pity that those early Christians, who had every opportunity for knowing the truth, and who went to the stake for their belief, could not have "exercised" just a little of "what is now known as historical criticism"! But they go on to say further: "If a narrative was edifying; if its tendency tell in with the tastes of its readers, then they called it true. Thus a legend might serve the purpose of the writers just as well as the true account of something that really happened. This is why the Old and New Testaments are so full of legends."

But not only are these writers, according to our critics, ready to invent a myth or legend when they think it would be "edifying," but also, when they have a purpose to serve, to falsify the record. Thus, speaking of the unknown author of the Acts, they say: "If only we could trust the author fully! But we soon see that the utmost caution is necessary." "No sooner do we place his story"—the story of Paul in the Galatians—"side by side with that of the Acts than we clearly perceive that this book contains an incorrect account, and that its inaccuracy is not the result of accident or ignorance, but of a deliberate design, conceived no doubt with the best intentions, to hide in some degree the actual course of events." So, also, the stories by the Evangelists of the raising of the dead are not only spoken of as false, but are imputed to a frivolous and unworthy motive. "Jesus," they say, "did, indeed, declare"—how do they know that?—"that he called the (spiritually) dead to life again; but these stories owe their origin not

so much to a misconception of this saying as to the simple love of the marvellous which could not bear the Christ to be outdone by the prophets Elijah and Elisha."

Since, then, these critics do not know who the historical writers were, or when they lived, or what opportunities they had for knowing the truth, but do know that they were ready to substitute legend for truth, to falsify facts for a purpose, and were dominated by a weak and unhistorical and uncritical belief in miracles, we are not surprised to find them saying that "the real state of things in these early times is disguised almost past recognition"; and also, that "we have constantly to express our regretful ignorance of the true history of the life of Jesus."

With authorities so uncertain, and in this state of "regretful ignorance," how do the critics suppose that the portraiture of Jesus in the Gospels, the only portraiture of a perfect humanity that was ever drawn, was originated? They tell us: "By means of a number of mythical and legendary inventions, and a succession of developments, a good and holy Jew named Jesus was metamorphosed into the divine Christ of the Evangelists."

Now I submit that, with this showing, there is no adequate evidence that this good and holy Jew ever existed, or if he did that any of the sayings ascribed to him were really his. His existence is attested by no known or reliable author, and there is no more evidence that he uttered the sayings than there is that he performed the miracles, which last they wholly deny. Nor is such a person needed. "A legend would serve the purpose of the writer just as well as a true account of something that really happened," and with so much of legend and myth and deception, and with such "a succession of developments," it is really more rational to resolve the whole into legend and myth and development than to suppose that such a person ever existed. In either case the Jesus Christ of the New Testament is equally denied.

Looking again at the positions taken by the authors of "The Bible for Learners," it is to be observed (third), that their professed regard for Jesus is inconsequent, and so must be inefficient, if not for themselves, yet for those who receive their teachings. Such regard they profess. Says Dr. Hooykaas, "But after all our chief concern is with Jesus. In any case we shall hear enough of him to be filled with the deepest admiration and reverence for his character, to love him in our inmost hearts, and to feel ourselves unspeakably indebted to him." "Deepest

admiration"! "Love in our inmost hearts"! "Unspeakable indebtedness"! All this for one to whom they stand in no personal relation, the account of whose life is so inextricably mixed up with legend and myth, and of whose "true history"—if he lived at all—they say "we have constantly to express our regretful ignorance." Do we then impute insincerity to these men? No. We simply suppose, what would almost necessarily happen, that they have been unconsciously influenced by the general teachings of Christendom, and have failed to carry out their own positions to their logical conclusions.

We are now prepared to notice (fourth) the absurdity—I use the word advisedly—of supposing that the forces back of Christendom as it has been and is, had their origin from any mythical Jew who "was metamorphosed into the divine Christ of the Evangelists." Christendom is the exponent of the greatest revolution the world has ever known—a revolution wholly peculiar, as involving a change of character and habits as well as of institutions; a revolution wrought out against the greatest possible odds, and by means apparently the most feeble and unpromising. Christianity is now leading the van of the only civilization that has in it the elements of permanence and of progress, and no one who comprehends its system can fail to see that it stands over against the moral and spiritual nature of man and corresponds to it, as nature stands over against his physical nature and corresponds to that. It meets every want, and has in it the conditions of an indefinite progress; and to suppose that such a system had its origin from a mythical Jew of whose "true history" the most advanced professors of "historical criticism, as now known," are "regretfully ignorant" is absurd.

I will only notice further the contrast be-

tween the mythical Jew of the critics and Jesus Christ as he is supposed by the great mass of Christians to be presented in the New Testament. This I do because it has been common of late for those who claim to be "liberal" in comparing Christ with other teachers and with the founders of other religions, to represent him as standing in all respects on the same plane with them. To their doing this in respect to his teaching there can be no objection. Let them do this fully, not picking out here and there a passage from a mass of rubbish, and the immense superiority of the Bible will be shown both in what it contains and in what it does not contain. But while we say this, we hold that in the distinctive feature of the person and work of Christ there is no ground for any comparison at all between Him and any other. The reason is that the mission and work of Christ involve personal relations to Him, while no relation of the kind is possible to any mythical Jew, or to any teacher or founder of another religion. These relations are most comprehensive and intimate. Now, as of old, Christ says, "Come unto Me . . . I will give you rest." "I am the light of the world." "I am the bread of life." "I am the way." "I am the resurrection and the life." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." He is our Redeemer, our Mediator, our Savior, our King, our final Judge. To him we are to give ourselves. Him we are to obey, and follow, and serve. It is in these relations that Jesus Christ is precious to us. Take him away in these and we care not what historical critics, however learned, may know or may be "regretfully ignorant" of concerning some "good and holy Jew," who lived and died, as other men live and die, eighteen hundred years ago.

MARK HOPKINS.

DR. NOAH PORTER'S ESSAY.

The Book a "Laborious Travesty of the Gospel History"—Neither the Mythical Theory nor the Tendency Theory can Account for the Belief in the Supernatural Story which Existed Thirty-six years After the Death of Christ—The Rise of the Christian Church a "Great Movement of Ethical and Spiritual Life"—Only One Reasonable Explanation of It—Much yet to be Learned from the Bible—Its Interpretation may be Modified by the Advance of Science and Criticism—But "the Supernatural Christ" is a Necessity.

The readers of the *EVENING POST* must by this time have become familiar with the salient features of "The Bible for Learners" and its relations to the works of a similar character which of late have not infrequently asked and found a hearing from the public. That its theory of the New Testament history is neither original nor novel has been abundantly asserted and proved by the able critics who have contributed to this series of papers, and is conceded by Mr. Chadwick, who writes in sympathy with the work itself. Why then does "The Bible for Learners" call for special attention? One reason is that it is written by learned professors and pastors in the Church of Holland, who may be supposed to be backed by a strong force of opinion in a so-called Christian Church. Another reason is that it forcibly represents what Matthew Arnold calls the irresistible and all-time penetrating Zeit-geist or Time-spirit, and what Herbert Spencer and others so confidently and so exclusively arrogate to their school as genuine science. Still another reason is that these professors and pastors have not been content with assuming a destructive attitude toward parts of the New Testament history, but have sought very laboriously to reconstruct the history anew after excluding from it every element of the supernatural and the miraculous. Such an attempt is of itself imposing by the force of its audacity, especially if it is reinforced with unquestioned learning, and sustained by a sincere though sentimental pietism. This pietism seeks to satisfy the tender and reverent associations that are the fruit of Christian education and Christian literature. And yet, after all that has been done in this direction, most of those who read this laborious travesty of the Gospel history must feel that they have a long way yet to traverse before they will be content to substitute the version of the Christ which is so confidently offered by the editors of this volume for the Christ whom the Gospel record and Christian art and literature have hallowed and made immortal.

On the other hand its parade of learning and the reiterations of its negative criticism are not without effect, especially when expounded with so confident an air and disguised by so imposing a sentimentalism. "The Bible for Learners" will be extensively read, and if not extensively believed it will weaken the faith or stimulate the questionings of thousands who would prefer neither to feel nor to own its influence. Many whom it will seriously influence are confessedly to themselves incapable of estimating the force of its arguments, while yet they will by no means be insensible to the array of its authorities and the plausibility of its theories. Not a few such persons will look bewilderingly to some helper who may deliver them from their perplexities. We fear that they may often look despairingly for a few brief but decisive considerations that may strengthen or restore their old faith. To such readers an argument which can be understood by any man who is able to read the New Testament in English may be more effective than a volume of learned criticism and discussion.

The first thing which it is necessary for such a reader to keep in mind is that these learned Dutchmen, with Strauss and Rénan and the Tübingen critics, take the position at the outset that any and every part of the New Testament is incredible which records or assumes the Supernatural in any personality or event. This conviction of theirs can be weakened by no strength of assertion, and no accumulation of testimony, whether direct or indirect. They begin and end their studies with the belief of what to them has all the power of a self-evident truth that whatever else in the New Testament may be true, all this part of it is untrue. This being assumed, they find themselves obliged to explain how these stories came to be circulated before they were written; then how they came to be written; and last of all, when they were written, how they came to be accepted as substantially true. To meet these difficulties the composition of the four Gospels is pushed forward into the second century, to find time for the admiring wonder

of several generations to gather around the person of Jesus and crystallize from this nebulous mist into the definite portraiture of His personality which the evangelists have given to the world. Unfortunately for this theory, so far as the most astounding of these supernatural events is concerned, the substance of these four Gospels is found in a little Gospel which it is universally conceded Paul wrote in the year 59 or 60, twenty-six or twenty-seven years after Christ is said to have risen from the dead. There is another statement of his which incidentally but positively affirms his belief in the same fact written five years earlier in the epistle to the Thessalonians—not much longer after the event than from 1880 to the time when Fort Sumter was fired upon. Then we have another letter to the Romans from the same apostle, written twenty-seven years after this supposed great miracle, in which the author gives very strong and decided views about the two sides of Christ's personality and the design of his mission to man. In the first of these letters he tells the believers at Corinth that he had declared the same gospel when he first came to them many years before, namely, that Christ was raised from the dead and seen by five hundred men at one time, the greater part of whom were still alive to tell of it, though it was twenty-six years after the event. No one pretends that Paul would lie. Everybody who reads this reiteration of his knows that the writer was honest. Consequently everybody who discredits the story is forced to explain how he came to be deceived. Mr. Chadwick says he saw a vision. He forgets to add that after the vision his belief was confirmed by the testimony of the five hundred who witnessed a similar vision. These witnesses Mr. Chadwick and all similar reasoners dispose of with a hasty suggestion of weak imaginativeness. They entirely overlook the consideration that Paul had been previously moved by a fanatical rage against the new faith in Christ as the risen Messiah which had broken out at Jerusalem and extended into the country as far as Damascus. They do not heed the fact that this faith three years after the alleged resurrection of Jesus was as definite concerning his person and work as it was in the fourth quarter of the second century. This is evident from the fact that Paul's letters, written within thirty years of his vision, are as explicit and strong and fervent in the conceptions which they contain of Christ and Christianity as is the "popular theology" of the present hour which is so distasteful to Mr. Chadwick.

This varied evidence from these epistles proves beyond question that within thirty years if not within five after the year 33 the Christian faith in the resurrection and in the person of Christ and the import of his mission which we find in the Gospels was received by thousands of living men who were ready to suffer and die for their new convictions.

The mythical theory and the tendency theory, when taken apart or used together, are set aside, if for no other very weighty reasons, because there is no place nor time for them; they cannot be made to account for the conceptions of Christ and his rising from the dead, which were as completely developed in the year 60—we may say in the year 36—as they are at the present moment. If this is so the student of history must explain how it happened that from three to thirty years after the death of Jesus these conceptions of his personality, his mission, and the greatest of all the miracles affirmed of him had taken the form which the evangelists portray in detail. It is safe to say that they cannot be accounted for in any way so well as by the explanation that these conceptions are true, and the facts which enforce them actually occurred.

It follows that the first question which any student of the Christian story should settle with himself is this: Is the supernatural possible and credible? To this question a very large class of men are ready to reply in the negative. Such men would do well to ask themselves whether there is a living God. To this question also many are ready to reply there is none. "Force is all. Of the essence of force we know nothing. Of its laws, however, we can know much. But whatever we know or do not know of either, we are confident that its laws can never be broken. A person who is self-existent and interested in man and who can control both force and law for man's welfare, we do not accept." Upon such a faith in God every species of scientific contempt and literary persiflage is now freely lavished. For this atheistic fashion of the hour there is no cure but time, which brings new fashions as it improves the breed of men, unless plague or famine or war or individual sorrows induce sobriety of temper, or a profound and wider philosophy shall convict our scientists of their narrowness and our *littérateurs* of their flippancy.

But if a man believes in God, who is the Father of men, the next question for him to ask is, Does he believe in duty, and in happiness through obedience and trust in God? If he believes in these he can easily believe that

God has manifested himself to man in the Jesus whom the Gospels portray and in whom Paul trusted. That the miraculous should enter into the life of such a person and be at once the fitting drapery of his superhuman essence and the attestation of his mission, forms no objection to the truth of a story which brings such a manifestation and message to man. It adds credibility to such a story, which without the miraculous would lack fitting accompaniments.

The spiritual significance of the Christian story being accepted and its supernatural features being found to add to its credibility rather than to weaken its force, its place in history is well assured by every criterion that is required. Geographical fidelity, chronological accuracy, correspondence with contemporaneous records so far as any exist, freshness of description, impression of verisimilitude such as proves the writers to have been witnesses of the events or reporters of current testimony directly received or universally accepted—all these are present in a fulness ample enough to satisfy the most exacting. The fact that Jerusalem was destroyed in the year 70, and the whole country was given up to a continued succession of social earthquakes for two generations from 66 onward, explains why there are no more concurrent narratives or traditions beside those furnished by the New Testament itself. It incidentally furnishes indisputable proof that the Gospel narratives or their materials were fixed distinctly in the memory of eye-witnesses, or recorded in brief narratives before the freshly-depicted scenes of Jewish life on Syrian soil had vanished into smoke before the fiery waves that swept over that land. The mysterious and puzzling prophecy of the destruction of the capitol, which to this day is an unsolved enigma to the commentators, could not have been written in such form and figures after the event which it so strangely describes beforehand.

There is another historic criterion of a more general character. In the first and second centuries, continuing through the third, a revolution in thought and sentiment, in manners and morals, moved like a mighty wave through the Roman world. It was at once the most wonderful and paradoxical that is recorded in human history. Its energy and swiftness are not so unmatched, nor perhaps its triumphs of suffering and martyrdom, nor its faith in the unseen, nor its raptures of devotion—all these may in some sense have been repeated before and since. The strange and unmatched features are the

new spiritual manhood which it wrought out of Pharisees and Sadducees, stoics and epicureans, ascetics and debauchees, conceited philosophers and the stupid *canaille*, and the fact that this new spiritual ideal was made a reality by the faith of every individual man of them in the supernatural mission, life, death and resurrection of Jesus as a comparatively recent event. This great movement of ethical and spiritual life is called the rise of the Christian Church. Concerning this historic phenomenon F. C. Baur, incomparably the greatest of modern anti-Christian critics, who rejects the supernatural origin of Christianity, writes as follows:

"While historical criticism has nothing to do with the inquiry what the resurrection was in fact, it must hold fast to the assertion that in the belief of the first disciples it had become an established and incontrovertible certainty. In this belief Christianity gained a ground for its historic development. What must be presupposed is not the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, but the fact that it was believed that he had risen. However we may explain this faith, the resurrection of Jesus had become to the first Christians a fact of conviction, and had for them all the reality of an historical fact."

It will be observed that Baur rejects the supernatural as impossible and incredible. He accepts the fact that the supernatural was believed, or the Christian Church would never have come into being. Forthwith he proceeds to explain how it could have been believed to be true and yet must have been false, because it was impossible. Another writer of equal sagacity and acuteness, Dr. Rothe, while he recognises the fact as true that multitudes of his countrymen would sooner give up their faith in a personal God than believe in miracles, says to such: "You must see to it for your own selves how you can adjust yourselves to history—that is, how you can find any actual explanation of the certain facts which it records for which we can find the keys in miracles alone. For myself, I do not accept miracles out of any dogmatic prepossessions, but simply in the interest of history itself, for the reason that in the case of certain undoubted historical events I cannot dispense with miracles as their historical explanation; not because they make large holes in history itself, but simply that by means of them I may be able to leap over the yawning chasms" of otherwise unexplained events.

These two writers represent the two classes into which thinking men are divided in respect to the truth of the Gospel History. Both are acute and logical and critical. They land in opposite conclusions because they set off from different starting-points in respect to the relations of God to nature and natural

law, and also with respect to man's need of a supernatural Christ and the service which Christ can render to man. Those who believe that Christ is little more than a superior genius in the same line with Shakespeare are perfectly logical in reasoning to the conclusion that he did not rise from the dead and that much of the story about him from his miraculous birth to his resurrection cannot be true. Those, on the other hand, who believe in man's need of a supernatural manifestation of God or a supernatural message from God, and moreover that the need is imperative and desperate, find no objection to the record that such a manifestation was supernatural. The shallow critics who think that the living God has ceased to exist because a certain class of scientists have found a substitute for him in an abstract conception called evolution have the ear of not a few bright-minded people just at the present moment, but the solid sense of reflecting thinkers has not yet thrown overboard that faith in theism which is as essential to the logic of science as it is to the wants and aspirations of the soul. A civil convulsion, a pervading pestilence, short crops or commercial disaster, or, on the other hand, a brief reign of terror as the legitimate consequence of the new-fashioned ethics, would be the short but effective remedy for the deification of orderly fate, and the worship of success and sensuality and frivolity

which finds no reason in a self-sacrifice, or humility or personal commerce with the Father of Spirits.

What the Bible is to learners must depend upon who and what the learners are. What men will find in the Bible will very largely depend upon what they bring to the Bible. This is no more true of this book than it is of books of geometry, or poetry, or art. All these are a blank or nonsense or drivelling to those learners who bring no mind to understand or sensibility to feel. Just so it is and must be, so the Bible itself declares that it will be, to those who read or hear it without some sort of belief or conviction beforehand to which it appeals, or in whom it does not waken the convictions and feelings which can appreciate and respond to it.

In saying all this we do not forget that there is a great deal to be learned from the Bible which has not yet been learned. The views of men in respect to what it means and how it is to be interpreted may be changed in many particulars with the progress of science and criticism. But that the supernatural Christ will ever be successfully conjured out of the New Testament by any such travesties as "The Bible for Learners" there are very many who do not believe. If anything were needed to confirm this faith, it would be the ill success of the laborious attempt which has occasioned this series of papers.

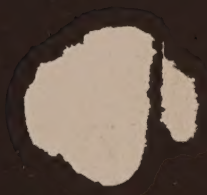
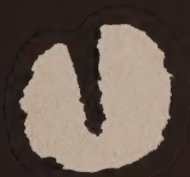
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